

FOOTWEAR TECHNOLOGY: HAGLÖFS

Swedish brand Haglöfs has created a new series of outdoor sandals featuring mouldable footbeds from Sole; a development which it claims places it ahead of the competition.

Sandals with soul

After two years in development, Sweden-based outdoor company Haglöfs has unveiled its first outdoor sandal collection, adding to its trekking, hiking and off-road footwear ranges for men and women. Although the company has been developing its footwear range for several years, this is the first time it has competed in the outdoor sandal segment alongside more established outdoor footwear brands such as Teva and Merrell. The unique selling point of the sandals, according to Haglöfs, is the footbed technology they feature. The company believes it is the first to have mouldable footbeds from Sole as standard in all its footwear. The three models it is launching – the Röse, Kobbe and Sele – all feature an “anatomically designed and integrated footbed based on Sole technology,” says Haglöfs. “The combination of a deep heel cup, an anatomically correctly designed arch section and support for the front arch of the foot stabilises the entire foot and creates direct contact with the terrain”.

Haglöfs Kobbe sandal is an everyday sandal that offers enough support for hiking.

 Haglöfs



Haglöfs sandals feature the company's new outsole, Watagrip, which provides good grip on flat, wet surfaces as well as rocky and muddy mountain trails.

 Haglöfs





The Röse offers a combination of protection and comfort, and is the most 'shoe-like' sandal in the range.

 Haglöfs

Stepping forward

In the last three years, Haglöfs as a company has grown by almost 50%. In July 2010, its owners, Swedish investment fund Ratos AB, sold the company to Asics Corporation of Japan for approximately \$128.7 million. The deal makes Haglöfs a wholly-owned Asics subsidiary and part of the Asics family. "Joining Asics enables Haglöfs to become a true worldwide leading outdoor brand," Mats Hedblom, CEO of Haglöfs, said at the time of the deal. "The business rationale is clear. Asics has been searching for the best outdoor company to complement their core business and Haglöfs has foreseen a need to find a partner with the knowledge and capacity to assist the company in a global expansion.

"Even though there are differences in size as well as in origin there are many similarities uniting Asics and Haglöfs. Both brands have a premium position and we share the same philosophy in everything from how we develop to how we differentiate our products. At the same time it's important to point out that even though we will now become family both companies will keep their own identity."

As part of its expansion plans, Haglöfs is now setting its sights on more markets, specifically in Asia. As part of its Asian establishment plan, Haglöfs opened a subsidiary in South Korea earlier this year. It is also aiming to become "a leader in the areas of technical outdoor and sustainability in all key global markets".

"Sustainability and negative changes to the earth's climate and ecosystems are key issues for Haglöfs and humanity in general. Sustainability is a natural and integral part of Haglöfs' day-to-day business," the company states. With this in mind, the new sandals have been made in what the company describes as a sustainable way, with sustainable materials. The webbing of the sandals is made of 100% recycled polyester. The footbed and midsole also have 15% cork which has been added in order to reduce the proportion of petroleum-based materials.

Supporting the foot

All three of the new sandals are water-repellent, non-absorbent and quick-drying, as well as having toe protection. The footbeds also feature polygenie natural silver salt technology as odour control.

The Haglöfs Röse "combines the stability of closed shoes with the comfort of sandals," the company states. "A closed-toe front gives increased protection and the sandal's stability also makes it suitable for longer hikes in the mountains with gear."

The Kobbe can be used for everyday use or hiking. It is a little more closed than the Sele, providing more support when hiking with a backpack. Finally, the Sele is an open sandal which, according to Haglöfs, is as light to wear as a flip-flop.

The Sole footbeds in the shoes feature an orthopaedic base layer that moulds to the foot. This support gently lifts the arch into its optimal position. When the arch is properly supported and the body is aligned, performance is enhanced in a number of areas, according to Sole, the US footbed manufacturer. Repetitive shock and alignment, balance and weight transfer, power and speed, and energy transfers and endurance are all areas in which Sole claims its footbeds aid the wearer.

The sandals represent another step in Haglöfs' expansion of its product offering. For spring 2012, the company will launch a number of trail walking models developed in partnership with Asics. 

Haglöfs claims that the Sele sandal is as light as a flip-flop, and ideal for use as a light and comfortable travel sandal.

 Haglöfs

