

## From Just Say No to Just Do It Nike Considered

By Mica James

The next generation of enlightened clothing is here and guess who's delivering? Nike.

Long the domain of innovators like Patagonia (bringing stylish organic cotton to the masses) and obscure labels (often eschewing commercial success in exchange for environmental sensitivity as badge of honor), eco-clothing is no longer simply a matter of sustainable fibers. The paradigm is evolving to embrace a fully integrated, more holistic view: sustainability from conception to disposal.



The Nike Considered line—an earthy, soul-satisfying collection of relaxed footwear—picks street cred by maxing out planet-friendly practices. To begin

with, the shoes are designed to be recycled—at the end of their useful life, just send them back to Nike for reincarnation. Factory rubber waste is recycled, reborn and incorporated into the new shoes' soles. Leather for the uppers comes from a tannery that recycles wastewater, eliminating the release of toxins into the environment. Vegetable dyes impart low-impact color, while adhesives, sourced from non-renewable petroleum products, are eliminated completely. In their place: snap-together sole construction buffered by hand stitching that adds strength, eliminates the need for inner linings and contributes to their walk-softly moccasin vibe.

The Considered shoes champion waste reduction: simple designs and fewer materials lead to a streamlined production process. The Boot, Rock and Gem shoes generate 63% less waste than traditional light hiking shoes and the Mule and Slide decrease waste by 33%. Solvents are reduced by 80% over similar conventional Nike products—a big reduction in health-compromising fumes. But it isn't just about the shoe, Nike sources the raw shoe materials within 200 miles of their factory to reduce transportation costs—that means less polluting greenhouse gases released into the air we breathe.



The shoes flaunt environmental consciousness and may challenge Birkenstock's position as footwear of choice amongst the granola crowd. A single hemp-polyester lace winds through the construction of the Boot, Gem and Slide imparting a macramé-Pocahontas esthetic but, more importantly, ensuring the snug customized fit we've come to expect from Nike. Unfortunately, you won't be tempted to run any marathons or shoot hoops in these shoes, they're pure chill.

With social responsibility built into the new shoes, it's hard not to forgive Nike for some of

their past sins. And with such strong environmental ethics touted for this line, it's hard to imagine that more planet-friendly practices won't soon be seeping into their mainstream offerings. For now, choosing to wear Considereds on your feet might be an enlightened act of tree-hugging environmentalism ...and a very accessible one for those of us who can't quite afford a Prius.