

More Than a Shoe?

- 1 **Stylish, futuristic**, different—these are some of the words used to describe Manolo Blahnik’s and Dave Graziosi’s shoes. What makes their shoes so special?

The Shoe Designer

- 5 Born to a Spanish mother and a Czech father, Manolo Blahnik grew up in the Canary Islands near north Africa. In his twenties, he moved to New York City and began to design shoes for women. Today, his high heels (often called “Manolos”) are known around the world. “Women love my
10 shoes,” says Blahnik. “Some never take them off.”

- Why are his shoes so popular? Yes, they’re beautiful. On the other hand, his high heels aren’t always particularly **comfortable**. They’re also **costly**; prices **range** from hundreds to thousands of dollars. Maybe the best answer is this: each
15 **pair** of Manolos is a work of art—like a painting by Picasso.

- But aren’t they just shoes? “Yes, only shoes,” says Blahnik. “But, if they bring a bit of happiness to someone, then, perhaps, they are something more than shoes.”

The Shoe Engineer

- 20 At \$30,000 a pair, moon boots aren’t cheap. But to walk in space, you need high-tech shoes—like those designed by Dave Graziosi. He and his team are making space boots for NASA.¹ “We’re planning for the moon and **beyond**,” he says.

- The latest space boot is the M2 Trekker. These boots are
25 smaller and **weigh** less than the ones Neil Armstrong² wore to the moon. In them, astronauts can walk comfortably on the moon’s **rocky** surface. M2 Trekkers also protect astronauts’ feet from extreme cold and **heat**. They can be worn in temperatures ranging from -212°C (-350°F) to $+177^{\circ}\text{C}$
30 ($+350^{\circ}\text{F}$). They are truly more than just a shoe!

¹ **NASA** (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) is a U.S. organization responsible for space travel.

² **Neil Armstrong** was the first astronaut to walk on the moon, in 1969.



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Some never take them off.”*

—MANOLO BLAHNIK

*“We’re planning for
the moon and
beyond.”*

—DAVE
GRAZIOSI



The Miracle¹ of Silk

1 *Silk*. The word itself is beautiful. The story of silk starts in China over 4,000 years ago. One **legend** says a silkworm's cocoon fell into a woman's teacup. It then opened into a single, **unbroken** thread. This was an important **discovery**.
5 The Chinese learned they could use the cocoons to make **cloth** that was both beautiful to look at and soft to touch.

Making silk was a protected secret in China for many years. In other countries, silk was very **rare** and **valuable**. Often it was **worth** more than gold. Legend tells us that the secret
10 finally got out when a princess left China to go to India. In her hair, she secretly carried many silkworms.

By the year 1 A.D., silk was sold as far west as Rome, and all along the Silk Road, which connected China with places in the Middle East and the Mediterranean. Eventually, around
15 the year 300, silk also traveled from China to Japan. Centuries later, in 1522, the Spanish brought silkworms to Mexico.

Nowadays people around the world still make many beautiful things from silk. But silk isn't only beautiful. It looks delicate,² but it's actually very strong. For example, it has been used to make bicycle tires. And some
25 doctors even use silk threads in hospital operations.³ Silk is also lightweight and warm. This makes it great for clothes like winter **jackets**; pants, and boots.

30 All of this from a little **insect**—the silkworm. That is the miracle of silk.



▲ Silk shoes on sale at a market in China



▲ A silk robe

¹ A **miracle** is something that is very surprising or fortunate.

² If something is **delicate**, it is easy to break and needs to be handled carefully.

³ During an **operation**, a surgeon cuts open a patient's body to remove, replace, or repair a diseased or damaged part.