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THE WINKLEPICKER

The Winklepicker, a popular footwear choice amongst a generation of contemporary musicians and youths, finds its origins in the medieval days.

Originally known as "poulaines", these shoes were worn as a fashion and social statement: the longer the point of your shoe, the higher your social status. The term Winklepicker was derived from the practice of using a sharp, pointed object to prise the winkle from its shell.

Throughout several centuries, the pointed toe was superseded by the rounder shapes. It was only in the 1950's that the winklepicker reappeared on the fashion scene. Although the Teddy Boys championed the Creeper, the Winklepicker also became a favourite. The pointed toe sharpened their counter culture look in an age that was still very conformist.

In the 1960's, the winklepickers were taken up by the modernists and their descendents, the Mods. Sharp and clean cut Italian suits and button down shirts were complemented by the sleek lines of the winklepicker. The winklepicker shape could also be seen in the Chelsea boots and Beat or Beatle boots (with a Cuban heel). This shape was very popular amongst the music scenes of the time.

The anti-establishment credentials of the 'picker were enhanced by their appearance in London street brawls and in press sensationalised bank holiday and beach battles between rival gangs.

In the 1970's, the winklepickers saw another come back. They were seen as the saviour of fashion sanity, as an alternative to the hippy and disco trend. Punks were quick to pick up the pointed toe as part of their statement.

The 1980s then saw the arrival of the New Wave, where the winklepicker experimented more with loud colours and design. The three buckle blitz boot, for example, was a favourite amongst the New Romantics.

Into the 2000's, the winklepicker has become the popular choice amongst the rock sub cultures with bands such as, S.C.U.M, The Horrors, Arctic Monkeys, Kings of Leon, and the Klaxons amongst the many fans.

The Underground Winklepicker collection uses an original 1950's last shape, that is the base for a range of classic and contemporary styles. Always a popular choice amongst bands and stylists, the Winklepickers future remains safe with Underground.

7