

Bata celebrates 125th anniversary with fashion extravaganza

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A banging catwalk show, an inspiring shoe exhibition, a fascinating and nostalgic pop-up museum - this was Bata Fashion Weekend 2019. The fashion footwear giant showcased its latest ranges and collections, including the Italian Collection, Chinese Collection, Asia Pacific Collection, and its technological ranges Bata Flexible, Bata Light and Bata Insolia. Also, on show was the Bata Heritage range and the world premiere of the new Power Mello sneaker. The event also featured the finale of the Bata Young Designers' Challenge. The shoe spectacular took place in Prague on 13-14 April at the historic Zofin Palace, as Bata celebrated its 125th anniversary. Join us on this shoe review...



The lights were low, the anticipation high, and on the backdrop of the stage all eyes were focussed on an animated beating heart entwined in the 'B' of Bata. This was Bata Fashion Weekend, the global footwear giant's annual extravaganza and, just as the audience became mesmerised by the beating heart, the DJ dropped some beats and models erupted onto the catwalk with an explosion of energy.

Bata, this year celebrating 125 years of shoeing the world, uses Bata Fashion Weekend to showcase its latest ranges and collections, and this year was no different. Prague, the venue for 2019 after Milan had hosted last year's event, witnessed a selection of the latest designs, while people across the world watched via live stream.

The fashion footwear company showed its premium **Italian Collection**, designed and produced in Italy using the finest quality leathers and the Italian flair for fashion design. Premiering this year was the new **Chinese Collection**, a range using classic Bata designs but with a fresh twist and contrasting, vibrant colours. Also, on show was the new **Asia Pacific Collection**, beautiful and bang on-trend with its use of animal and floral prints.

The brand's fast-fashion range, named **Red Label**, was up-to-the-minute in terms of design and clearly built for style, with the ever-changing range using the latest design cues and aesthetics.

Drawing on its 125-year history, Bata has a Heritage range, featuring retro kicks with a contemporary spin. It was **Bata Heritage's** latest collaboration with the iconic Coca-Cola that was showcased here. The audience were also treated to a sneak peek of the latest sneaker from Power, one of Bata's brands. The **Power Mello**, with its marshmallow-like sole, launched globally soon after Bata Fashion Weekend.

Bata places great emphasis on its technologies which, it says, make Bata shoes more comfortable and more functional. The technologies on show in Prague were **Bata Flexible** (smart-casual, featuring ultra-flexible outsoles, assuring greater flexibility and giving a more comfortable walk), **Bata Light** (light as a feather, trendy, informal and with built-in shock absorption and unbeatable comfort), and **Bata Insolia** (a dressy and chic range which improve posture, balance and extends wear-time for medium to high heels).

But it wasn't just about the catwalk shows. Bata exhibited the shoes in a separate hall, allowing the audience to get up close and personal with the pieces that had wowed them from the stage. Alongside the shoe exhibition was a pop-up museum, displaying items, vintage shoes and movies from Bata's 125-year history.

You'd expect a renowned shoemaker to offer a special shoe when celebrating such a special birthday, and this is exactly what Bata has done. Its **125th Anniversary Edition**, an elegant capsule collection, was on show too, though they will not be available in shops until October 2019.

The event also featured the finale of the Bata Young Designers' Challenge, an annual contest which this year saw top design talents from universities from Italy, Kenya and the Czech Republic compete to design and produce a prototype sneaker. The winning shoes, chosen by a panel of judges at Bata Fashion Weekend, will be put into production and sold across the world at selected Bata stores.

As the doors closed on Sunday 14 April, the catwalks, exhibition and museum had played to packed audiences, with millions more across the world tuning in via live stream.

Jana Barbatí Chadová, Head of Global Marketing for Bata and the person leading the organising team, gave us the last word: "I feel so proud and honoured to be part of this. Showing our amazing shoes in such a historical venue, and to see all the smiles on the faces of our audience, it was so special. Honestly," she said, borrowing the brand's tagline, "I feel quite emotional, but comfortable with it."

If you missed the event live, you can catch the recorded live stream on **Bata's YouTube channel @batashoes** (please [click here](#)).

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