

News Release

CHINAPLAS 2026: BASF, The Directive Collective, and Clarks unveil polyurethane concept shoe showcasing next-generation material innovations

■ **BASF at CHINAPLAS 2026: Booth 7.2C41, National Exhibition & Convention Center, Shanghai, China**

Shanghai, China – April 7, 2026 – BASF has introduced a new polyurethane (PU) concept shoe, co-created with the design studio The Directive Collective, and the TRIEASE collection with global footwear brand Clarks. The project brings together BASF's latest PU innovations in a unified material system, demonstrating how advanced materials can support future footwear development.

With a focus on enhanced cushioning, construction, and materials, the PU concept shoe explores design-led material possibilities. Clarks' TRIEASE model for Spring/Summer 2026 applies the same principles to a comfort-focused walking collection. These parallel developments show that extreme comfort, refined aesthetics, and responsible production can coexist.

Built on a one-material PU platform, the athlete recovery concept shoe integrates transparent Casting PU (CPU), spray PU, and synthetic leather made without the use of organic solvents into a unified system, addressing the growing market demand for athletic recovery footwear:

- PRISM transparent CPU outsole delivers both visual clarity, outstanding anti-slip performance and long-lasting durability, setting a distinctive foundation for the design.

- Elastopan® spray PU midsole and upper provide lightweight cushioning while enabling more intricate geometries than conventional foams, underscoring the shoe's advanced material engineering.
- The heel uses Haptex®, BASF's innovative PU synthetic leather made without the use of organic solvents, offering formability, comfort and a lower environmental footprint.

For Spring/Summer 2026, Clarks and BASF extend their joint commitment to advancing comfort-focused footwear. Built on the principle of 'comfort shoes made for walking', the collaboration combines Clarks' design and biomechanics expertise with BASF's material innovation and data-driven insights.

More than a product launch, TRIEASE reflects a strengthened connection between data-driven insights, material development, and manufacturing. Under the theme "Walking, Evolved," Clarks and BASF introduce a modern walking solution that brings together high performance, streamlined design, and responsible material choices.

"Our collaboration with The Directive Collective and Clarks shows how PU can unlock both design exploration and product innovation," said Silvia Mok, Vice President of Business Management Polyurethanes Systems, Performance Materials Asia Pacific, BASF. "The concept shoe and the TRIEASE development run in parallel, both drawing from the capabilities of an integrated PU system to explore different design possibilities."

Half a century ago, Clarks brought scientific rigor to footwear through gait analysis and innovative materials, exemplified by the Movers collection and its iconic curved sole. Today, TRIEASE represents a new convergence of Clarks' shoemaking expertise and BASF's material science, demonstrating that comfort, minimalist design, and responsible production can coexist.

The concept shoe was designed by Richard Kuchinsky of The Directive Collective, whose creative direction shaped the aesthetic narrative and material expression of the concept. The Directive Collective's collaboration with BASF ensured the prototype demonstrated both the intended design vision and real-world manufacturability.

About BASF

At BASF, we create chemistry for a sustainable future. Our ambition: We want to be the preferred chemical company to enable our customers' green transformation. We combine economic success with environmental protection and social responsibility. Around 108,000 employees in the BASF Group contribute to the success of our customers in nearly all sectors and almost every country in the world. Our portfolio comprises, as core businesses, the segments Chemicals, Materials, Industrial Solutions, and Nutrition & Care; our standalone businesses are bundled in the segments Surface Technologies and Agricultural Solutions. BASF generated sales of around €60 billion in 2025. BASF shares are traded on the stock exchange in Frankfurt (BAS) and as American Depositary Receipts (BASFY) in the United States. Further information at www.basf.com.

About BASF's Performance Materials division

BASF's Performance Materials division drives the transformation of the plastics industry by uniting sustainability with high performance. Our materials expertise, deep industry know-how, and broad product portfolio make us the preferred partner for comprehensive solutions across the plastics lifecycle. With dedicated material-focused teams, strong R&D power, and a global production network close to our customers, we deliver tailored offerings that meet regional and industry-specific needs. Our products enhance performance and efficiency in key sectors such as automotive, construction, consumer goods, and industrial applications. Together with our partners, we embark on #OurPlasticsJourney towards a more circular and sustainable future. In 2025, the Performance Materials division achieved global sales of €6.4 billion.

Join #OurPlasticsJourney on LinkedIn https://on.basf.com/PM_LinkedIn

and in our newsletter https://on.basf.com/PM_Newsletter.

Further information at <https://www.performance-materials.basf.com>.

About Clarks

Turning 200 years old this year, Clarks, based in Somerset, England, has been at the forefront of innovative shoemaking since its foundation in 1825, when brothers James and Cyrus Clark made a slipper from sheepskin cut-offs. At the time it was ground-breaking: a combination of invention and craftsmanship that's remained at the heart of what the brand does now. In the Clarks archive of more than 22,000 pairs are shoes that have sparked revolutions and defined generations. From the original Clarks Desert Boot, first designed by Nathan Clark and launched in 1950, to the iconic Wallabee, each design has an instantly recognisable signature that makes it unmistakably Clarks. Clarks is a global business operating retail, wholesale, franchise, and online channels in over 100 markets.

<https://www.clarks.com/>

About The Directive Collective

The Directive Collective is a Toronto-based footwear design consultancy specializing in performance running and innovation. The studio provides strategic, creative, and technical design services through a product-led approach that integrates design, development, and engineering from concept

through production. The Directive Collective partners with brands to create footwear that fits, functions, and performs.

Richard Kuchinsky is Principal and Owner of The Directive Collective and a footwear designer with more than 25 years of industry experience. An avid runner and five-time Boston Marathon qualifier, Richard brings the perspective of both designer and athlete to his work, helping brands develop performance footwear that balances function and style, informed by authentic running insight.

www.directivecollective.com