

A Foot In The Right Direction

VEGETARIAN SHOES AND BAGS ALLOW FOR ANIMAL FRIENDLY FASHION

by Andrea Verdin

I love shoes and purses, plain and simple. I'm the kind of gal who will go hungry because I've bought a pair of shoes that I couldn't live without.

Ever since I've begun working at *Vision Magazine*, I've tried to live a greener lifestyle.

For the first time in my life, I'm reading labels, buying organic and paying attention to what I use. I'm thinking about what has to happen in order to choose and purchase the products that I use on a day-to-day basis.

In the past, I rarely gave a second thought to where my products came from, and when I did, I figured that the animals that died for me to wear leather heels or carry a suede bag were at least

treated nicely while they were alive.

You can imagine my dismay when I found out exactly how animals used to make leather, suede, silk, and wool are actually treated.

I decided that in order to take a stand against this cruelty, the best thing I could do is make sure the shoes and purses that I bought weren't made from any animals, but I still wanted to achieve my cute and trendy look.

I quickly learned that this is easier said than done.

I would seek out shoes that I thought weren't made with these products, but would find out much later that they had leather soles! I was heartbroken.

The few shoes and purses I did find



that I knew weren't made with animal products weren't very cute or fashionable at all; in fact, they looked like they had been designed by a kindergarten class! The shoes, especially, were generally poorly made and very uncomfortable, and I wasn't sure that I was willing to give up my look in order to make a statement.

What was a girl, whose heart was torn between helping animals and wearing fashionable shoes, to do?

I had just given up hope when I found VegetarianShoesAndBags.com

This website is dedicated to helping fashion aficionados like me find chic, comfortable, and affordable shoes that are animal-free. They have everything from boots, heels, clogs and sandals to flats, and everything else you could possibly imagine.

At first, I was a bit wary, thinking I was going to find shoes that weren't cute, or that weren't going to be what I was looking for. But not only did I find

really fun shoes made from hemp, jute, bamboo, natural cork, organic cotton, and recycled car tires, I also found cute belts, wallets and purses too!

What really caught me by surprise was the fact that these shoes and accessories weren't just cute, they were actually from name brands like Madden Girl, Simple Shoes, and Earth Shoes.

I picked up a pair of Madden Girl's pink wedges, and as I wore them around town, I got multiple compliments about how cute and trendy they were. I was constantly bragging about how my shoes were vegan, and I didn't have to kill something to look

adorable.

A few of my friends were skeptical about the idea of having "vegan" shoes, and said they could just buy shoes made from rubber anywhere.

But I explained to them it's not just about the look and material of the shoes that matter; it's the message that's tied to them.

Chris and Tanya Hartley, the owners of Vegetarian Shoes and Bags, believe their customers can continue to "look fierce without being cruel," and it shows as you easily peruse their website, clicking on products with bright, happy colors that promote green and vegan living.

In fact, the slogan for the company says it all: You don't eat 'em, so why wear them?

For more information about Vegetarian Shoes and Bags or to buy your own pair of vegetarian shoes, go to VegetarianShoesAndBags.com.