

# TIMBERLAND

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DOCUMENT

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In this day and age most lifestyle brands chase the same thing. The holy grail is an authentic heritage, qualitative products with a unique identity and enough charisma to make them worthy of our attention, money and devotion. It's a tricky combination – most brands lack it and will never become 'classic' as a result. Timberland, the American footwear and apparel brand, is lucky enough to tick all those boxes.

Over time, several of its products have given the New Hampshire-based brand iconic status on a global scale. Its most famous product the Yellow boot – a Nubuck-coloured 7-hole workwear staple – has managed to transcend fashion trends, and is today worn worldwide. Most people recognise the colour and acknowledge the characteristic design, even if they don't own a pair.

So important has the boot been that the company, originally called the Abington Shoe Company after the small town on the US East Coast where it was founded, took the boot's style name as its corporate identity over 30 years ago. Since then the two have been inseparable.

So what makes a company or a product iconic? One way is having it associated with various sub-cultures and integrated into youth movements. As such, the product – boots in this instance – become part of society and woven into the fabric of history by representing a specific time and place. The Timberland boots, whether worn by rappers on the streets of Brooklyn in 1993, or seen in a coffee bar Milan, in 1989, as part of the Paninaro uniform, are cultural signifiers. They've come to symbolise an attitude and energy, a youthful and, sometimes, rebellious point of view.

Whereas Dr Martens is punk and Converse equals rock, Timberland can't be defined. The boots mean hip-hop for some, grunge for a few and acid-house for others. Nevertheless the power of music is universal and the same is true of clothes and boots.

This Document sets out to capture that energy and attitude. It aims to pin down Timberland's atmosphere. The Document looks closer at the geographical place where Timberland was born, and how its harsh climate has shaped the brand. This project documents how people – you, me and those around us – discovered the brand, why we included it in our everyday uniform and why we aspire to get hold of old, rare styles or the next collaborative boot Timberland is dropping. The Document tells both the story and the history of the brand. Not in a corporate way, but from a personal point of view. Timberland is a pop-cultural staple and that's why this matters.

David Hellqvist

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# The Godfather of Paninaro <sup>Milan</sup>

Olmes Carretti

Photography  
Piotr Niepsuj

Text  
Neil Summers



Whenever talk turns to the influential 1980s youth movement Paninaro, the first point of reference will always be the all-important hero brands that fused together those suave yet streetwise Italian teenagers. This Euro-prep set was dominated by a specific list of initially hard to source labels, which was then teamed with an air of teenage aloofness and Latin machismo down at the Il Panino cafe in Milan. The result was a look that's still imitated by countless contemporary brands to this day. Back then most of these fresh and expensive garments were obtained by pestering your mama and papa whilst holidaying with the jet set down at the swanky resorts of Sardinia, Portofino and Cortina d'Ampezzo. But once this playboy look had taken hold of Milan, the Paninaro style and attitude soon spread like extra virgin olive oil on warm focaccia throughout the rest of the country.

The Tozzi of Roma and the Zanarini from Bologna, both similar youth groups to Milan's Paninaro, followed a similar pattern of pavement posturing, kitting themselves out in the obligatory Timberland boots, Armani jeans and Moncler jackets to an upbeat and exhilarating soundtrack of British synth-pop music and the revving of two-stroke engines.

In the early 1980s, Italy was in a celebratory mood. Like many of its neighbours it had finally found itself enjoying peace on the streets and a new wave of optimism after years of violent political turmoil. The tragic and terrifying Years of Lead, a wave of extreme terrorism that destabilised Italy from the late 1960s to the early 1980s, had come to an end. There's one man who personifies the sartorial zeitgeist of this era more than any other. Best Company founder Olmes Carretti brought colour, happiness and life back to the Piazzas through his sweatshirts. Despite describing these sharply dressed city slickers as "wild boys", he became their man of the moment.

These fashion-hungry kids found Carretti was speaking their language. His bold choice of colour and expressive use of classic American imagery fed their appetites. More than 30 years later the menswear luminary clearly remembers the revved-up revolution. "In 1983 I was visiting Piazza San Babila, an area in the centre of Milan," recalls Carretti, speaking from his home in Reggio Emilia, a half-an-hour drive from Bologna. "I noticed groups of young people leaning up against the bars in front of their small motorcycles wearing very peculiar clothing... They were the Paninaro!" The first impression they made on Carretti was defined by their clear love of logos and labels.

"They had Timberland shoes on their feet, Burlington socks, Levi's jeans, El Charro belts, sweatshirts from Best Company, Swatch watches, Henri Lloyd Consort jackets, Ray-Ban Wayfarer sunglasses and an abbronzatura perennial."

It was a look that made them stand out against the typical 1980s Milanese working man, whose wardrobe would contain traditional and sombre colours. The abbronzatura perennia (a round-the-year tan) is further testament to the aforementioned holidaying lifestyle of the privileged Paninaro, a group who were clearly skilled at lying around in the sun all day. "Yes, they were committed to doing nothing," says Carretti. "Their philosophy was to refuse the ideological conformism of the 1960s and 1970s and to embrace hedonism. They didn't want to look like the others, a typical attitude for teenagers!"

Though it's true that most teenagers are happiest when hanging out or appearing to do nothing in particular, it's fair to say that these teenage rebels were also enjoying the novelty of walking the streets without fear of witnessing a terrorist act. "Of course, in Italy the Paninaro were reacting to the previous Years of Lead," explains Carretti. Despite this apparent apathy and lack of political dedication the Paninaro certainly put in the hours when it came to creating their own unique look. "Yes, they had their own identity and style. At the time it was very controversial. You had to assemble brands approved by the Paninaro in order to gain group membership." There was a strong visual element to the movement. "The colours were perhaps the most obvious aspect of their style and creativity. They wore magenta, fuchsia bougainvillea, sky blue, navy blue, British green and Naples yellow."







With his eye for bold, optimistic colours and peer approval, Carretti's Best Company designs were quickly adorning the sweatshirts and T-shirts of Italy's rapidly emerging youth tribe. "Several different Paninaros informed me that it had become a part of their uniform. I was surprised and amazed. The polo shirts and sweatshirts were the most popular, especially prints with particular images evoking actual events such as driving down Route 66 in the saddle of a Harley-Davidson FX Super Glide." Despite their brand loyalty and Best Company's huge popularity amongst the Paninaro, Carretti stayed true to his design instincts rather than courting his new fans. "I never thought of dressing the Paninaro," he claims. "I repeat; I have never designed with them in mind. I didn't agree with their way of thinking, though I did understand their sense of unease regarding politicians."

Best Company and Timberland not only share a tree logo but also a nationwide popularity, especially with this style-obsessed tribe. Carretti himself was already a big fan of the US brand, having discovered it a few years before seeing it on the Paninaro. "I remember buying two pairs in New York back in 1975. I got both high and low versions of the Nubuck chukka boot to wear in extreme conditions out on the ice and in the woods, but also in an urban context. I'm still a fan of Timberland – I currently own three different models. I find the shoes technical, catchy and addictive. I wear them because they're a high quality make, and perform well when used for the activities they were specifically designed for." So these days the reluctant 'godfather of Paninaro' is still designing clothes, while also wearing parts of the street uniform that he first saw in bars and on scooters in Milan nearly four decades ago.



Photography  
Samuel Bradley

# Il Paninaro

Styling  
Elgar Johnson

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Mark Thompson





Intro spread: Danny wears jacket, by Timberland. Jumper, by Percival. Above: Danny wears jacket, by Carhartt. T-shirt, by Sunspel. Jeans, by Levi's. Ben wears jacket, stylist's own. T-shirt, by Timberland. Jeans, by G-Star. Right: Jacket, by Cos. T-shirt, by River Island





Ben wears jumper, by Topman. Shirt, chinos and Yellow boots all by Timberland.  
Danny wears jacket, by Levi's. Jumper, jeans and deck shoes, all by Timberland





Above: Same as before. Right: Ben wears jacket, stylist's own. Shirt and jeans, both by Ralph Lauren. Yellow boots, by Timberland





Danny wears jacket, by Levi's. Jumper, jeans and deck shoes, all by Timberland.  
Ben wears jumper, by Topman. Shirt, chinos and Yellow boots, all by Timberland



Ben wears jacket, by Carhartt. Shirt and jeans, both by Timberland.  
Danny wears jacket, by Topman. Shirt, by Ralph Lauren. Jeans and Yellow boots, both by Timberland







Danny wears jacket, by Topman. Shirt, by Ralph Lauren





Above: Ben wears jacket, by Uniqlo. Shirt and boots, both by Timberland. Jeans, by Ralph Lauren. Danny wears jumper, by ESK. Jeans, by Topman. Yellow boots, by Timberland. Right: Ben wears jacket, by Carhartt. Shirt, jeans and boots, all by Timberland. Danny wears jacket, by Topman. Shirt, by Ralph Lauren. Jeans and Yellow boots, both by Timberland





Left: Ben wears jacket, by Uniqlo. Shirt, by Timberland. Above: Ben wears jacket, by Carhartt. T-shirt, by Timberland. Danny wears jacket, by Cos. T-shirt, by Sunspel

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