



Press Kit

Company and Product Information

6/29/2010

This document includes background information about the O'Couture company, its founders, its products and its philosophy. Press release announcing the company launch is also enclosed.

Table of Contents

PRESS RELEASE 3

 Two Orange County minority women follow their dream and launch chic new shoe line 3

COMPANY BACKGROUND 5

 The O’Couture Difference 5

 The Founders 6

 About Sebnem Eler Acar 6

 About Zehra Balkan Buyukuncu 7

 O’Couture and Social Responsibility 7

FACT SHEET 8

 About the shoes 8

 About the ornaments 8

 O’Couture and social responsibility 8

COMPANY BOILERPLATE 9

FROM THE O’COUTURE BLOG 10

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Sebnem Eler Acar

O’Couture

sebnem@ocouture.us

Two Orange County minority women follow their dream and launch chic new shoe line

Eco-friendly O’Couture footwear features handmade, interchangeable ornaments

For Sebnem Eler Acar and Zehra Balkan Buyukuncu, a passion for shoes as well as entrepreneurship provided the foundation to launch O’Couture, an Orange County, Calif.-based footwear company founded on the basic premise that women ought to have endless choices when it comes to shoes — without having to spend a small fortune.

“We all love shoes,” says Sebnem Eler Acar, who co-founded O’Couture with friend Zehra Balkan Buyukuncu in January 2010. “We never seemed to find high-quality, all-leather shoes that we seek at a more affordable price point.”

O’Couture features a signature line of high-quality leather flats with interchangeable ornaments. Customers simply pick a shoe style and color, select their ornaments — and swap them out anytime to match a new outfit or occasion. The shoes can take a woman from the office to a dinner party with a simple ornament change, thereby supporting a “less is more” philosophy that means many styles fit in just one shoe box. It also means women can buy fewer shoes and reduce their carbon footprint without compromising style.

While company co-founders Sebnem Eler Acar and Zehra Balkan Buyukuncu have no prior footwear industry experience, the minority women entrepreneurs have quickly learned the ins and outs of

running a successful, socially responsible enterprise. As a company by women and for women, the partners follow European standards for fair employment, with no child labor or sweat shops used to manufacture the shoes — and they also provide opportunities to women, who handcraft the ornaments from the comfort of their homes.

“Consumers are getting more and more engaged with the brands and their identities these days and are willing to spend their money for a good cause when they shop,” says Acar. “That is why we are very proud of our company philosophy at O’Couture.”

Currently available online at <http://www.ocouture.us>, O’Couture shoes and ornaments will soon arrive in select boutiques across the United States. Product samples are available upon request for retailers interested in carrying the O’Couture line.

About O’Couture

One pair, endless style: That’s O’Couture. Based in Irvine, Calif., O’Couture — whose name pays homage to its Orange County roots — came about not only from the founders’ own entrepreneurial spirit, but also from their desire to make their mark in the fashion world with a stylish shoe line that wouldn’t break the bank for increasingly budget-conscious consumers. Each pair of O-Couture shoes is made with top-quality Italian leather and features interchangeable ornaments that cut down on consumption of natural resources and the release of environmental pollutants by allowing women to do more with less — in other words, buying fewer pairs of shoes without sacrificing style. Versatile, stylish and affordable, O’Couture footwear is currently available for purchase online through O’Couture’s website, and the company is seeking wholesale partners throughout the United States. For more information and to become an O’Couture Facebook fan, log on to <http://www.ocouture.us>.

COMPANY BACKGROUND

Sebnem Eler Acar and Zehra Balkan Buyukuncu, who first started entertaining the idea for O’Couture in September 2009, traveled to Europe that year to research manufacturing partners and officially launched the business in January 2010. Seeing a gap in the market for designer-quality flats that didn’t cost \$400 a pair, their goal was to create high-fashion shoes that also would cut down on consumption of natural resources and the release of environmental pollutants by allowing women to do more with less — in other words, buying fewer pairs of shoes without sacrificing style.

The O’Couture Difference

Versatile, fashionable and affordable, O’Couture’s signature line features chic flats with exclusive, limited-production ornaments that customers can easily interchange from one occasion to the next. Customers simply select a shoe style and color, then choose from several different ornament styles that attach easily to the shoes with sturdy magnetic clasps. With O’Couture, women can change their shoe styles as often as they change their outfits, making the shoes an ideal fit for their contemporary lives — where smaller apartments, lack of storage space and on-the-go lifestyles are the norm, not the exception. A single pair of O’Couture shoes can take a woman from the office to a dinner party with a simple ornament change, offering:

- **Affordability:** Buy one pair, and you can create a variety of styles in an instant by interchanging the ornaments. You will also be wearing designer-quality shoes at a much more affordable price point.
- **Individuality:** Express your unique style and stand out from the crowd.
- **Emancipation of style:** Ever feel like you are stuck with the fashions available in a given season? With O’Couture shoes, you do not have to emulate fashion to be stylish. Simply snap on an ornament, and you’ll always be fashionable in your own unique style.
- **Comfort and style:** Flat shoes are women’s best friends when it comes to comfort — and with O’Couture, you’ll never have to sacrifice style. Flats can complement every outfit — and, in recent years, they’ve graced the feet of everyone from First Lady Michelle Obama and France’s First Lady Carla Bruni-Sarkozy to high-profile celebrities such as Victoria Beckham and Katherine Heigl.
- **Unique, handcrafted styles:** Each ornament is handcrafted by local artisans and uniquely styled by Zehra and Sebnem — all made with top-quality fabrics, ribbons, tulle, lace, beads, crystals and more, sourced from all around the world.

- **Space savings, environmental friendliness:** O’Couture shoes solve a common problem for today’s urban women, who live in small apartments and have limited closet space. O’Couture’s “less is more” philosophy means many styles fit in just one shoe box. It also means women can buy fewer shoes and reduce their carbon footprint without compromising style.
- **Versatility:** One pair, many occasions — Go through your day literally in one pair of shoes, from the office to girls’ night out. Just remember to pack your ornaments in your purse.
- **Easy travel:** Pack light when you’re on the go.
- **Social responsibility:** All shoes are made in Europe following European standards for fair employment and environmental safety. No child labor or sweat shops are involved in making the O’Couture shoe line.
- **A company by women, for women:** O’Couture’s founders provide opportunities to women, who handcraft the ornaments from the comfort of their homes.

The Founders

The company’s history is as storied as the shoes themselves. Although the founders share common Turkish roots, their paths crossed in Orange County, California. In an effort to meet new people, Zehra contacted Sebnem through Facebook in November 2008 — and the pair instantly hit it off. After nurturing their friendship for several months, they realized they shared a common passion for entrepreneurship, and they decided to embark on the O’Couture journey together.

As minority women entrepreneurs with no prior footwear industry experience, Sebnem and Zehra founded O’Couture on the premise that when women come together in friendship, they can accomplish anything they set their minds to. Passionate, ambitious and committed to their dreams, the partners are making a difference one ornament at a time.

About Sebnem Eler Acar

Born and raised on the Mediterranean Coast of Turkey, Sebnem moved to Istanbul for college and, in 1999, moved to Orange County for graduate study in electronic engineering. With a master’s degree from the University of California at Irvine, Sebnem built a highly successful career in technology management over the course of 10 years. However, her creative and entrepreneurial passions ultimately inspired her to branch out on her own. With the launch of O’Couture, she and her good friend Zehra are fulfilling their desire to offer women an affordable, designer-quality product that’s both versatile and stylish — as well as beneficial for the environment.

About Zehra Balkan Buyukuncu

Zehra was born and raised in Istanbul, Turkey, and came to Orange County in 2005 to pursue a master's of business administration. After studying management and receiving her MBA from California State University at Long Beach, she worked for six years in the field of optics and sunglasses. Learning the business of fashion opened new doors, and before long, Zehra — like Sebnem — had the urge to do something different where she could help the environment as well as offer women more freedom in their fashion choices.

Within the next year, the founders hope to have established a happy and loyal U.S. customer base, brand recognition and a presence in independent boutiques — as well as integrate new color choices. They're also keeping their eye on the global market, striving to expand into boutiques worldwide.

O'Couture and Social Responsibility

Made with fine leather sourced from Italy, O'Couture shoes are manufactured in Europe at a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility that follows European standards for fair employment and environmental protection, with no child labor or sweat shops and a commitment to social responsibility. O'Couture also works with women business owners who employ stay-at-home moms to create the handcrafted ornaments — offering flexibility as well as opportunity for women who wish to create income from home while caring for their families.

FACT SHEET

About the shoes

- Made with the finest-quality leather: leather uppers, leather insole and leather sole
- Available in two styles: Laguna Ballet Flats and Newport Ballet Flats
- Color options: black, brown, ivory and nude
- Include built-in magnetic clasps for interchangeability of ornaments

About the ornaments

- Handcrafted by local artisans, with materials sourced from around the world
- Uniquely styled by the company founders

O'Couture and social responsibility

- All shoes are made in Europe following European standards for fair employment
- O'Couture's founders provide opportunities to women, who handcraft the ornaments from the comfort of their homes

COMPANY BOILERPLATE

One pair, endless style: That's O'Couture. Based in Irvine, Calif., O'Couture — whose name pays homage to its Orange County roots — came about not only from the founders' own entrepreneurial spirit, but also from their desire to make their mark in the fashion world with a stylish shoe line that wouldn't break the bank for increasingly budget-conscious consumers. Each pair of O-Couture shoes is made with top-quality nappa leather and features interchangeable ornaments that cut down on consumption of natural resources and the release of environmental pollutants by allowing women to do more with less — in other words, buying fewer pairs of shoes without sacrificing style. Versatile, stylish and affordable, O'Couture footwear is currently available for purchase online through O'Couture's website, and the company is seeking wholesale partners throughout the United States. For more information and to become an O'Couture Facebook fan, log on to <http://www.ocouture.us>.

FROM THE O'couture BLOG

Good news, ladies...O'couture is here!

As I mentioned in my last post, I was fortunate enough to be contacted by a woman via Facebook who shared my dream and passion for entrepreneurship — and shoes. I'd like to say that Zehra, who has become my good friend, got more than she bargained for in O'couture, and in a good way.

We've now officially launched our eco-chic footwear line, featuring designer-quality leather flats with interchangeable ornaments. Not only are they great for women on a budget, but they're also easy on the environment, because women can do much more with less — reducing their carbon footprint, as it were (pun intended), without compromising style. With one pair of shoes and a boxful of ornaments, women can express their own unique style every time they step out the door, and that's just the way we like it.

We are a company founded by two women who have no prior footwear industry experience, yet we are passionate and ambitious enough to undertake this enormous entrepreneurial journey. In fact, we take women entrepreneurship so seriously that we provide opportunities *for* women: Our ornaments are handcrafted by women who work from the comfort of their homes so they can earn an income while still caring for their families.

For now, we're offering our stylish flats exclusively online at www.ocouture.us. However, our goal is to locate wholesale partners who share our vision for offering socially responsible style choices for women who don't want to drop \$400 on a pair of shoes, but do want versatility and designer quality in their wardrobes.

And because we love Orange County (hence the O'couture name), we'll likely be pounding the local pavement in our chic new leather flats, spreading the word about O'couture everywhere we go. The nice thing is, we can change our ornaments anytime, so we'll never feel like we're wearing the same shoes over and over again!

If you see us out and about, please stop and say hello, and tell us more about what you'd like to see in the way of shoes and ornaments. Remember, the ornaments are handmade, so they're only available

for a limited time. We're always trying out new styles and materials so we can help you craft the right looks for any occasion — and we'd love to get your input.

Keep an eye on this blog and our website for more updates, and don't forget to become a fan on Facebook. Until then, you can start shopping now and customizing your shoes just for you...so you can start expressing your unique style right away.