

[TEXAS MADE]

DECONSTRUCTED

LUCCHESE BOOT

Lucchese Bootmaker was born in 1883, when Sicilian brothers Salvatore “Sam” and Joseph Lucchese opened a shop at Fort Sam Houston, a U.S. Cavalry School in San Antonio. Word spread that the brothers made quality boots, and the company grew. In 1986, Lucchese moved its operation to El Paso, where today more than 100 employees work amid the hum of sewing machines. Now, Lucchese is staking its claim as a luxury brand with a showroom in Dallas’ Design District. Here’s a look at the Randall boot, inspired by the original created and worn by Sam Lucchese. lucchese.com. —C.J.D.

Made in the U.S.A.

Any pair of Lucchese boots with this stamp was made in El Paso. Lucchese also has a factory in Mexico that produces less expensive boots.

Shaft

Front and back quarters combine to form the boot’s shape. Because the boots are still made the way they were 135 years ago, any gluing, stitching, or studding must be done by hand. Lucchese employee Fernando Hernandez, a third-generation boot maker, works on a sewing machine that’s more than 100 years old. Says Lucchese’s Mario Vega, “We’ll take his knowledge and expertise over any piece of machinery any day of the week.”

Custom work

Lucchese will customize any pair of boots. For example, many Texas legislators get their names and districts stitched into the shaft.

Fit

What’s an ideal fit? Boots should be snug but not uncomfortably tight. “We compare it to a firm handshake,” Vega says. “You’ll feel pressure, there will be give. And when you walk, the heel should lift up.”

Piping and stitch patterns

Piping refers to the stitched lines that run along the boot’s side, where the seam is. Stitch pattern refers to the swirling designs on the body. Every model has different combinations, and in some styles, cording is added by hand, then glued and overstitched to give the piping a fuller, three-dimensional look.

Leather

Lucchese keeps more than \$2 million worth of high-grade leather in stock, from wild alligator to stingray skins. Wildlife regulatory organizations govern the use of such materials, and most leathers are byproducts of meat processing.

Water, heat, and fire

During several steps of the boot-making process, the leather is kept wet for stretching and shaping. Boots are then put in a 200-degree “hot house” to dry for two days and torched to sear off any loose threads.

Vamp

The vamp covers the top of the foot, joining the quarters. Lucchese uses a proprietary last—a foot mold made of plastic. “Sam Lucchese had a huge fascination with the human foot,” says Vega, adding that Sam always paid careful attention to the asymmetry and curves of heel, toe, and ankle when designing his boots.



FUN FACT The largest boot Lucchese ever created was size 25, for professional wrestler and actor André the Giant.