

GEAR UP

AN ESSENTIAL BOOT BY THE BACK DOOR

The passing of the vernal equinox here in Aspen signifies two things: the days are getting longer, and snow, sunshine and rain showers are all climatic possibilities, often within the same hour. With weather conditions varying by the minute, versatile footwear is critical for springtime success. It is common practice in ski towns to leave a pair of all-purpose shoes by the door that can be quickly slipped on for shoveling duty or a beverage run. The footwear in my entryway that have been getting the most use lately, particularly as we slide into mud season, are the Chasseur Leather Lined Boot from Le Chameau.

At first glance they are a typical green rubber boot, but the Chasseur improves upon the traditional Wellington silhouette with the addition of a few key features: a full-length, waterproof zipper that allows them to be removed without dislocating a rib and an all-terrain outsole that will comfortably take you from snowy morning to slushy afternoon. The leather lining is also surprisingly supple. I've worn them briefly without socks to retrieve a paper from the driveway but wouldn't recommend extended barefoot usage.

As with many great brands, Le Chameau originated out of necessity. In 1927 Claude Chamot was running an agricultural products store in Cherbourg, France, and was inundated with complaints from his customers - primarily fishermen and farmers - about the comfort and durability of their boots. Using personal designs and vulcanized rubber, Chamot took the matter of his friends' feet into his own hands, developing a boot suitable for tradespeople on land and at sea. Chamot's hand-crafted boots were a sensation in Normandy and quickly gained a following throughout France.



As the company grew, Chamot opened a factory in Casablanca and renamed the enterprise Le Chameau, "The Camel," a gracious nod to Morocco and a clever play on words.

Today, each pair of Le Chameau are still handmade by a "maître bottier" who has undergone an intensive nine-month training program. The company responsible for the first leather-lined rubber boot is still innovating, incorporating modern fibers like Kevlar into their traditional processes to create a long-lasting product.

While many might associate wellies with the English countryside, I can assure you that these boots are as at home making coffee runs in the Rockies as they are flushing red grouse in Yorkshire. The Chasseur delivers the highest levels of craftsmanship and a bespoke mindset in the last place you would think to look for them - a rubber boot. They will be by my door for years to come.

- Oliver Sharpe

GET YOUR OWN

Le Chameau
Chasseur Leather
Lined Boot
\$489