

Custom Job

Making your shoes unique is an obsession with some sneakerheads. But forget corporate customization, these three artists take personalization to a new level by creating individually commissioned kicks. << By Jennifer Ernst

Steven Cedre, 32

Company: Sole Junkie Custom Kicks

Location: San Diego

Nickname: "Sole Junkie"

Customizing sneakers for how long? Two years

Background: After graduating from California State University, Long Beach, with a degree in fine arts, Cedre worked in corporate America for a few years before a freak accident, which occurred while he played with his 2-year-old son, popped two disks in his neck and left him unable to work. As he recuperated, his brother in New York called him and said he had seen people on the streets airbrushing shoes and asked him why he didn't do something similar. Cedre painted a few samples and then posted them online. "People started asking if I'd do shoes for them, and I thought, 'Maybe I'm on to something here.' I've painted shoes ever since. People have a hard time figuring out if it's art or a pair of shoes."

Materials used: Hook-Up Paint, 22-carat gold, diamonds

Design trademark: "My use of color and negative space."

Most popular style to work on: "I'll do anything — Nike Air Force Ones, Adidas, K-Swiss, Blazers. But I do very few Reeboks — they already come colorful."

Average time per pair: Two to three days of painting, three to four days total

Customer base: "I'm amazed at how many people from so many walks of life can respect what I do."

Celeb clients: Bobbito Garcia, Alexis & Fido, among others

Prices: \$200 for just color; \$350 to \$800 for designs with 22-carat gold leaf detail

Where available: Custom sneakers can be commissioned online at Solejunkie.com but are not yet available in stores.

