



FOOTWEAR

Athletic Shoe Brands Step Forward at Paris Men's Shows

- The move to a strong athletic footwear presence in the French capital has been years in the making.

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As the Summer Olympic Games took over Paris in 2024, it was no surprise to see a large number of athletic brands activating around men's fashion week then.

But the fervor around sport has only increased across the City of Light. Key players, including Nike, Adidas, Puma, Asics, Saucony, Salomon and New Balance, are out in full force this week in a market that has become crucial to their growth strategies.

Jason Faustino, Saucony's global director of energy and collaborations, said the deep connection between art, music, sneakers and streetwear culture is on full display at Paris Men's Fashion Week.

Saucony is hosting a series of activations throughout the week at its 141 Rue du Temple "Sync Space" location. Highlights include a group run with Minted New York, a curated matcha hour with Bronx-born designer Jae Tips, a live Collab Lab hosted by Bimma Williams bringing together for the first time Jae Tips, Marcus Milione of Minted New York, Andrew Chen of 3sixteen and Metagirl, Saucony's just-announced collab partner, and an end-of-week all-day party with Paris-based Collision Running.

While inside the Sync Space, Saucony noted that guests will have the opportunity to get hands-on with key pieces from the brand's fall 2025 collection including the Endorphin Speed 5, Guide 7 and Saucony Silo, a lineup blending performance innovation with design sensibility.

Joy Allen-Altimare, global chief marketing officer at Saucony, said fashion week represents more than just a global fashion moment.

"For Saucony, showing up in Paris means engaging not only with key sales partners, but also directly with our passionate community through events with our collaborators, like the Minted New York run experience and Collab Lab with Bimma Williams, which has been so popular we've had to wait-list attendees," Allen-Altimare said.

Asics is also set to showcase the latest offering from its Sportstyle line at 17 Rue Communes' three-day activation. In its fourth annual pop-up, the Japanese brand will stage its key styles of the season: the Gel-Quantum 360 AMP in collaboration with JJJJound and the Gel-Kinetic Fluent reinterpreted by Shushu/Tong.

Kentaro Saito, general manager of product development at Asics, noted that for spring 2026, buyers will see elements of the brand's 2010 running models throughout, including the Gel Kayano 20 model and the new Gel Cumulus model.

"You can also expect to see some of our key silhouettes from spring 2025 in 2.0 versions; showcasing enhanced comfort and visible technological updates, alongside material and color refreshments," Saito said.

Some of the brand's long-term partners such as Cecilie Bahnsen and Kiko Kostadinov will be front and center.

But as for the athletic category's dominance of the fashion week, Saito added that over the last few seasons he has noticed that Paris has become a "great place" for the company to gather its global community of collaborators, media and creatives. "France is one of our largest markets and we are happy to spotlight our partners here," Saito said.

Puma also unveiled its collaboration with designer Salehe Bembury. Highlighted by the new Velum, Bembury's first lifestyle silhouette with Puma, the company hosted a public pop-up at 18 Rue Saint Gilles on June 25, where 100 pre-release pairs of the sneaker will be available exclusively. Bembury himself greeted guests and signed the first pairs of his new collaboration. The space is open to the public for the next three days, Puma noted.

To round out the experience, Puma is bringing elements of the H-Street installation, introduced during the recent launch in Seoul, to Paris. Visitors will have an exclusive chance to preview the low-profile silhouette up close, ahead of its official launch later in June.

As for Nike, it is set to host a series of





events centered around its signed athlete Faith Kipyogen, who is attempting to break the four-minute-mile record in a race this week. On Thursday, Nike will host a fireside chat with fellow athlete Eliud Kipchoge ahead of a tour of Kipyogen's Paris headquarters for her "Breaking4" project.

Adidas will also host several events this week. A small dinner will pop up with collaborator Mr. Bailey for his latest shoe slated to drop later this year. Adidas is also showing its newest collections with Willy Chavarria and Y-3 this week.

As for Salomon, the French mountain sports brand is deepening its foothold after successful activations last year. The brand, known for its roots in skiing and trail running, sees fashion week as a way to build a bridge from mountain wear to urban city style.

"We have this concept of 'invented in the mountain, reinvented in the city,'" said Salomon global chief brand officer Scott Mellin.

As a French brand, Salomon sees Paris as "the epicenter...not only of urban-run culture, but obviously of fashion and sports style culture," said Mellin. "Paris Fashion Week is such a fun place for us to play creatively."

Salomon is planning to invest in fashion week events in future seasons, as well as open an office in Paris this fall.

"There's a kind of overarching narrative of Salomon that starts with our purpose. We exist to unleash the best in people through mountain sports," he said, reflecting on the brand's legacy of innovation in materials and performance

as well as its cultural relevance. "It's part of an understanding of cultural integration" of sport products moving into lifestyle. "You nurture that culture and that becomes a business," he said.

This year's Salomon's Paris activation continues its engagement strategy. Last summer in the run-up to the Paris Olympics, the brand focused on unveiling the origins of its S/Lab line of shoes developed in collaboration between designers, engineers and athletes. In January, the brand shifted to a sustainability showcase.

Now Salomon is highlighting the craftsmanship S/Lab, focusing on materials, engineering and functional design – not to mention its cool factor.

This season the brand is hosting three invite-only fashion week events, as well as two public-facing events, including a takeover of popular café Le Progrès and a pop-up store. Salomon brand ambassador chef Guillaume Sanchez will create two dishes there, and there will be a card game and the chance to win some gear.

While the brand's aesthetic aligns with fashion trends, Mellin said the brand is still staying true to its core. "At the end of the day, we're not following anybody at Salomon, and we don't make product to make product. We make product to serve a function in the mountains," he said. "This is, in essence, the brand equity that we are transferring to our consumers. When you buy something from Salomon, you're part of the mountains, whether it's in Paris, Milan, London or Shanghai."



