



JUSTIN



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“We didn’t want to disappoint traditional retailers, so we didn’t go after that,” he said.

Miller admitted the company “chased some styles” and didn’t always ship 100 percent of orders. For Durango, the boot boom has been huge, particularly in women’s styles.

“Three years ago, retailers didn’t want anything to do with women’s boots,” Miller said. “They’d tried them and it didn’t work.”

Today, women’s styles are the hottest thing going, and Durango has responded by adding more styles and designs to keep the company in the forefront of the trend.

“Trends don’t last forever,” Miller added.

For Ariat, the challenges have been similar. Its Western boot business has grown more than 75 percent this year alone.

“We anticipated much of the growth, as we could see the Western trend starting to develop three years ago in Europe and New York City,” said Beth Cross, founder and president of the company. “Our product remains on the core Western consumer, however, and we have not invested our design resources on the purely fashion Western customer.”

Cross said her company has instead

chosen to focus on innovation, producing footwear “designed for the performance needs of world-class professional Western riders of all disciplines.”

Responding to the uptrend in Western footwear was somewhat easier for Double H Boots, which manufactures most of its Western styles at its plant in Pennsylvania.

The company also developed its Sonora line more than a year ago to address the growth in demand for women’s Western fashion footwear, according to marketing manager Steve Schappell. The line includes upscale designs that combine the best of Western and fashion.

“We have expanded our sourcing resources to better meet the needs of the industry,” Schappell said. “We shop in Europe twice a year to see the current fashions that will reach us in the next nine to 12 months. We then work to create unique patterns and designs that are Western influenced and unique to the industry.”

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DOUBLE H

BCB GIRLS

“We believe Western is a category, not a trend. The trend is not being driven by the Western industry, but by the fashion industry.” —Steve Schappell, Double H Boots