

Octavio Lubrano knows about outfitting a champion.

The Jordan Brand senior footwear designer was responsible for working with New York Yankee and four-time world champ Derek Jeter on his 10th signature shoe, the Jeter Cut.

The baseball player reached the 3,000-hit mark during Saturday's game at Yankee Stadium, and his shoes are now enjoying more of the limelight.

The Jeter Cut, which launched this past April, is available now at major retailers for \$95. A special "3,000 hit" package of crosstrainer and cleat is due later this summer, at select retailers.

Here, Lubrano discusses his ideas for the line over the years.

1. Does Derek Jeter have a special significance for the Jordan Brand?

OL: He's the longest-[tenured] Jordan athlete, the first guy handpicked by Michael Jordan to represent the brand. And I think all of his accolades speak for themselves.

2. How did he inspire the design of the Jeter Cut?

OL: Two years ago, I asked him, "What does training mean to you?" He told me training to him was like an uncut diamond: The more you polish it, the better the stone. When you look at his career, he is polishing his game over and over again; he is very meticulous. And I looked at the cut as an inspiration for the performance part of it, not just the cosmetic. I took cutting very literally. I liked that analogy. It's how I got started with the whole cut concept.

3. How was design on this shoe different from other Jordan shoes?

OL: We're really taking a closer look to make sure we communicate the performance and the attributes of what makes this shoe right for the athlete. For Jordan training, we wanted to make this shoe meet all of the athlete's training regimen, meaning the athlete should not have to change or alter the shoe. This should be the one training shoe [you need] when you want to train seriously, whether you play football, baseball or basketball.

4. What is it like to work with Jeter?

OL: Derek is very easy to work with. He really trusts that we know how to build the right shoe. He's meticulous about certain parts of the [design]. There have been a lot of times where cosmetically he didn't like it and he definitely let me know. But overall, he's been kind of easy to work with. We have a good relationship and so forth. We also get feedback from him on some of the other training products to make sure he's involved.

5. What's coming up next?

OL: The next two models coming out are about 12.5 oz. That's probably the lightest we've made it. Also, [we're] bringing it down to a lower cut [because] traditionally he prefers a little higher. But we got him to explore going a little bit lower to give him more range of motion on the ankle.