An exclusive New York retailer turns to an old-world name to brand a new-world concept in shoe marketing and design, and to NSB to deliver next-generation customer service and retail IT.

“A woman’s path”; that is the meaning of té casan in ancient Gaelic. Although this forerunner of many modern languages has not been widely spoken for centuries, it just might make a comeback, since té casan is now on the tip of every shoe connoisseur’s tongue as the name of one of today’s most innovative retailers and premier shopping destinations. In fact, many women’s paths are leading straight through its front door.

A substantial step up
In a retail world filled with mass-produced merchandise, franchise stores, and limited service levels, shoe emporium té casan distinguishes itself by rejecting all of the above. Instead, its unique blend of hand-made, limited-edition shoes and ultra-personalized service makes té casan a refreshing alternative for those seeking something different — and a substantial step up.

Created within 7,500 square feet of real estate in the heart of New York’s Soho district, the property occupied by its flagship store alone would be enough to make this retailer stand out. However, that’s actually just a small part of the main té casan story: One step inside is all you need to realize you’re about to enjoy a shopping experience unlike any you have encountered. This is not a shoe store: This is a gallery filled with wearable art, and it is the brainchild of a man named Yaron Kopel.

From revelation to revolution
Yaron Kopel is the former head of retail for Microsoft Israel and the pioneer of two highly successful Israeli retail ventures. Upon moving to the U.S., his frustration with what he saw to be the prevailing retail standard convinced him it was time to get creative, and to reposition shopping as a well-deserved indulgence rather than a just a functional chore.

Kopel concluded that there was a wealth of talent to be found behind the scenes at fashion houses such as Alexander McQueen, Versace, Dries van Noten, and Vivienne Westwood, but that most women could not afford the shoes distributed by these labels. To address this challenge, he plucked seven designers from virtual obscurity and asked them to design shoes, or rather, objects d’art, for té casan. The goal was twofold: to expose these artists to the world, and to give people the opportunity to purchase the products of their enormous talent at reasonable prices — before they become the next Manolo Blahnik. By providing a vehicle for its unknown designers to grow as artists, té casan thus views itself as not just a retailer but equally as an incubator of talent.

Innovation in design, service — and retail IT
In addition to having offices in New York, Spain and Switzerland and seven designers from around the world, té casan offers service so personalized that the customer will be able to pay for her purchases through a handheld device delivered to her own private pod as she sips tea. Therefore, they needed an IT solution every bit as innovative as their retail concept, and one that could support all of these components effectively and efficiently. They found exactly what they were looking for at NSB.

Following a thorough analysis of no fewer than 23 retail IT software providers, Yaniv Shirazi, té casan’s Chief Operating Officer, selected NSB’s hosted Software as a Service offering as well as its Mobile POS. “Besides having the solution that best suited our needs, the level of integrity I received from the NSB staff and the positive recommendations I received from other retailers made NSB an obvious choice for té casan,” says Shirazi. “In a world of half-truths and manipulation, NSB’s team stood out by being clear and up-front about what they could provide. They were very straightforward and honest, and I found that very, very attractive. I cannot work any other way. I need to know that when people say they are going to do something they actually do it. I found that to be the case with NSB.”

A fully hosted system with mobile POS
NSB’s Software as a Service will provide té casan with all the advantages of “big retailer” IT — and more. By dramatically reducing their up-front and on-site technical requirements, it will let them benefit from NSB’s acclaimed Connected Retailer® suite while lowering their total cost of ownership. This will allow té casan to focus on running its business instead of its retail systems. The Software as a Service offering has been quickly and strongly accepted by numerous small- to mid-sized retailers who do not wish to allocate resources to traditional software licensing and in-house IT operations.

For its part, the Mobile POS with receipt printing device will provide customer capture and customer lookup, give employees the ability to conduct inventory enquiries and locate stock, capture orders on the spot, and verify pricing. NSB designed the system to place all the power of a traditional checkout-based POS system conveniently and directly into the hands of store associates, thus enabling té casan to achieve its goal of offering clients the ultimate in personalized service.

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Continued forward motion
Since opening its doors in November 2006, té casan has become the talk of the town among fashion-forward New Yorkers. Similarly, their Connected Retailer systems from NSB are attracting the attention of other retailers who understand that advanced, service-enabling technology can support both differentiation in the market and overall business success.

NSB will continue to track that success at té casan, as well as our own contribution to it, through future case studies and articles. In fact, as long as té casan continues to repave the path women take when purchasing shoes, NSB will be there every step of the way.

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