



Leslie Klipsch

# The Full Kit

A tastemaker and trendsetter returns to his Q-C roots

BY LESLIE KLIPSCH

**W**hen someone tells you that they've collaborated with Nike to design a tennis shoe, you lean in and listen. Mitch Dettman, owner of The Full Kit, a gorgeous downtown Davenport menswear shop, was part of a project Nike calls "Support Your Local" and last February released a small-batch sneaker design that told the story of the 2006 Iowa City tornado.

"The design was inspired by the dark storm clouds and the white funnel, with hints of another memorable tornado represented by blue gingham and hits of red and yellow," explains Mr. Dettman with a smile. "Two weeks after the shoe was released in Iowa, it was all over the world.

"It was at Nike Town in Las Vegas, I saw it on Instagram in Hong Kong ... it was pretty great to see our name on it. Because of our long relationship with Nike, we really got to be a trend-maker."

After 14 years of success in Iowa City, Davenport native Mr. Dettman, who turns 40 this month, opened a second location of The Full Kit in the Quad-Cities this past February. He and his wife, Kayla, a teacher at Truman Elementary School, returned to the Quad-Cities in 2014 excited by Davenport's rapidly developing downtown. Having visited both locations, I believe they've outdone themselves with the handsome new space filled

with a well-curated selection of unique men's shoes, clothing, accessories, and, in a nod to Mr. Dettman's roots, bright and artful skateboards.

Through his years in the retail business, it's obvious that Mr. Dettman has developed an eye for finding unique pieces that other stores don't pick up, which is part of the appeal of The Full Kit.

"What we offer are things you can't find everywhere," he says. For instance, The Full Kit is the only store in Iowa to stock made in the U.S.A. sneakers from brands like New Balance and Saucony.

"I love the resurgence we're seeing

of products made in the U.S.A. There are a lot of cool, smaller brands that are making things here and I'm always on the lookout for them."

Mr. Dettman says his personal tastes are reflected in the Davenport store. "In Iowa City we cater to a college-age demographic. In our Davenport store we get to be a little more classic. We're not so tied to the trend-of-the-month, but rather offer nice looking, quality outfits aiming more toward a timeless look."

### Mr. Dettman's favorites

"The thing I'm most proud of is the

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exclusivity of our shoes. There's a huge sneaker culture alive today and we offer what people are looking for," says Mr. Dettman. "Companies will do a quick strike each month. They'll keep it secret and then they'll blast pictures. Each pair of shoes tells a story. For instance, a shop in Michigan collaborated with Nike to make a sneaker modeled after a Model T in a nod to the car industry. Out of only 800 made, we stocked 18 pairs of them."

### **My favorite**

I was first pulled into The Full Kit by my two 'tween boys who spotted the brilliant wall of sneakers from Main Street as we headed to the downtown public library (and, let's be honest, Oh So Sweet bakery for an after-school cupcake). The wall of shoes

is impressive and I made a mental note to come back during the holidays to shop for my husband, a 36-year-old professional who appreciates a bit of style.

Among the many items in the store that I think he'll love are the shirts made by The Quiet Life, a label that Mr. Dettman has carried since 2007. The Los Angeles-based company designs classic button-downs featuring a splash of color or pattern and hats made with exclusively designed patterns. I'm also excited to check out the travel kits and beard oils that Mr. Dettman says will hit the store before the holidays.

### **Why you should check out at The Full Kit**

As we discussed The Full Kit's new space, I mentioned to Mr. Dettman that



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crossing the threshold made me feel like I'd landed in a boutique in Wicker Park, a trendy Chicago neighborhood. "We hear that a lot," he responded. "We hear that our store reminds people of New York or Chicago. But I honestly think that with social media, style doesn't have to just trickle down to the Midwest anymore. It doesn't have to come from the East or West coast. If it's popular or trendy, it's on Instagram or Twitter instantly. We're here ready to respond. Iowa deserves a store like this. It's right here, right now."

## The details

The Full Kit is located at 312 N. Main St. in downtown Davenport. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday noon to 5 p.m. You can also check out The Full Kit's beautiful website at

[thefullkit.com](http://thefullkit.com) and follow them on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. On Nov. 19, The Full Kit will host a reception for Iowa City artist Mike Stenerson as part of Third Thursday, an evening featuring special hours and events by locally owned downtown businesses.

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Each month in The Gold Standard, Leslie Klipsch, a freelance writer and editor based in Davenport, shines a spotlight on the gems of the Quad-Cities area — for Gold Book readers. She enjoys reading, cooking, spending time with her husband and three young children and exploring all that the Quad-Cities has to offer. Read more of Leslie at [leslieklipsch.com](http://leslieklipsch.com).

