**PUMA x SNEAKER FREAKER SHARK RE-ISSUE PACK**

**Q&A with Simon Wood (aka Woody), Founder and Editor of Sneaker Freaker Magazine by Jon Tang, PUMA Lifestyle Footwear Designer**

**Jon Tang (JT): Why do you think the original release of the PUMA x SF Blaze of Glory Shark was such a success?**

**Simon Wood (SW):** It’s really for others to judge, but I think that both shoes were a really tight package. Five years down the track, they still look just as fresh, which is not always guaranteed. In hindsight, both the ‘Great White’ and ‘Black Beast’ were unique, each pair ‘owning’ their colour palette, which was also intrinsic to their appeal. I have never been able to work out which one I prefer myself and it seems to be running 50/50 everywhere else judging by the feedback I’ve seen recently. I feel the Blaze of Glory is an underrated model…the Trinomic sole is a killer foundation and the shoe is just spot on! I remember back in 2008 when we released the first pictures of the grey Blaze, it just came out of nowhere and shocked everyone. It gave them an element of mysterious unavailability that helped build mystique around the release.

**JT: When PUMA came to talk to you about re-issuing the Blaze of Glory, what was the first thing that came to mind?**

**SW:** I have to admit, the first thing I wondered was whether it was a good idea or not. I cannot recall collaboration like this being revisited five years down the track, so it deserved some consideration. Out of all the shoes we (PUMA & SF) have done, this is the one project I still get asked about all the time. Since they are so fondly remembered, I thought it would be nice to see them back on the street again. I would love a fresh pair as much as anyone, so I’m glad Brook Diedrichs, Senior Product Line Manager of International Footwear at PUMA came to us with the idea.

**JT: What was different about this release in comparison to the original release on the shoes?**

**SW:** It was tempting to do a 1:1 repro, but I also think it is useful for people to instantly know which version they’re dealing with. The black shoe originally shipped with turquoise laces instead of black, so I fixed that right away. The sock-lining is now the same colour as the shoe, which is the most obvious change. We also added a performance inner sole for maximum comfort. Aside from that, the shark tooth jewels are still there, as is the fluorescent pink pop on the OG black shoe. I have to thank you as well Jon, the wrinkled nubuck you found that mimics the sharkskin leather on the OG Friends and Family edition is perfect!

**JT: Oh you got it! What was the collaboration like with PUMA this second time around?**

**SW:** You were great! No really! (laughs) For reasons I don’t recall now, the first version of the grey Blaze took something like two years to get from the first sketch to the shelf. That was an eternity! It’s hard to explain why these projects take so long, but I would say that this time the process was smoother, definitely quicker and much, much easier. A little bit of banter and out they popped!

**JT: What about this new release do you enjoy the most?**

**SW:** I don’t mean to sound corny, but it is deeply satisfying to know that people still really dig these shoes. The Blazes bring back a lot of good memories for me personally and I think for a lot of people at PUMA, too.

**JT: What’s your take on the industry shift to not using actual exotic materials?**

**SW:** The European high fashion brands are still using python, ostrich and stingray on their shoes, but in the past few years I can only think of a few examples of athletic brands using leathers such as anaconda and crocodile. So I don’t think it’s really a big issue. I’m not sure why the policy came about, but it’s obviously a good thing if you’re an animal with a fancy pelt!

**JT: If you could work with one other PUMA footwear style, which would it be?**

**SW:** Easy question. The XS850.

**JT: What are the top 3 things you are into right now?**

**SW:** Better Call Saul, Bringatrailer.com and Jim’s Special Fried Rice