

# THE EAST HAMPTON STAR

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## Working

SCOTT HEWETT

Scott Hewett of Noyac studied to be "a struggling, starving artist" at the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston, but subsequent designing jobs with Stride Rite and Reebok - since 1990 - have kept him on his toes and the wolf away from the door.

Mr. Hewett would like in time to paint more and design less, but in the meanwhile he's busy keeping Shaquille O'Neal, Sean Kemp, and Allen Iverson, "the equivalent to the next Michael Jordan," well-shod with a diverse array of sneaker designs sporting ever-new technological features which, in turn, are marketed to an adoring young public around the world.

"The first Iverson shoe we did," the red-haired, hazel-eyed Mr. Hewett said during a recent conversation, "brought in \$16 million worldwide."

He's on his third Iverson signature shoe now, much lighter than the original version because it is all foam, no rubber. Like the second version, it uses technology that transfers cushioning air within the thick sole between heel and toe.

Working out of his house near the Bridgehampton Race Circuit property, as does his wife, the former Diane Mendelman, a graphic designer, Mr. Hewett uses a computer and fax machine to exchange ideas with a Reebok engineer and a marketer in Macao - who happens to be his brother Todd - and thus keep pace with the highly competitive athletic-shoe industry.

"It's amazing how many designs he can come up with," said Mrs. Hewett, when a visitor asked if there weren't a limit to the variations on the sneaker theme. "He even gets ideas from the lures he uses to troll for fish."

The industry, said Mr. Hewett, is "very intense, very competitive. There's big pressure. On average, I design maybe 20 to 25 shoes a year, basketball only. . . . The shelf life of a shoe is 30 days, from the first time it's sold at retail until it gets marked down."

"Kids want more, more, more."



**For business, then, it must be good, good, good.**

**One shoe Mr. Hewett has designed presumably has few takers at retail outlets. That would be the Los Angeles Laker center Shaquille O'Neal's size 22, a container of jeroboam proportions, a shoe one can only fully appreciate by picking it up.**

**"You should see his hands," Mrs. Hewett said of the seven-foot-one-inch, 340-pound O'Neal, who her husband said no longer represented Reebok.**

**Mr. Hewett, who captained the Haverhill (Mass.) High School swimming team, was not wearing sneakers the other day, though he does, he said, when meeting with Iverson, the Sixers' guard. "I like him a lot - he's an artist himself. I've done caricatures of him and a painting" that will hang in Reebok's Stoughton, Mass., office.**

**As is the case with more and more couples, the Hewetts - her parents live in Springs - said the computer and Internet had enabled them to live on the East End. "Ten years ago we wouldn't have been able to do this," she said. "We have a better quality of life out here, though I worry a bit about being over-reliant on the computer."**

**Though not a basketball player, Mr. Hewett, who travels to Boston twice a month, likes the sport, and because of his hand in it, he'll soon be able to watch Celtics games from close up in Reebok's seats at the Fleet Center, the former Boston Garden, now that the lockout has ended.**

**Sometimes kids, when they learn what he does, will say, "'Wow, you did those shoes?!'" And he'll be asked to sign basketballs, which he finds a kick.**

**Mr. Hewett is also a drummer - one in search of a band, it might be added. Asked if the round, shallow shaman's drum from Nepal that hangs from the living room wall - a djembe, a medium-sized, multi-tonal drum from Mali, is also on display - were used to ward off evil spirits, he replied, with a laugh, "I bang it to ward off my wife when she's mad at me."**

**JACK GRAVES**

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