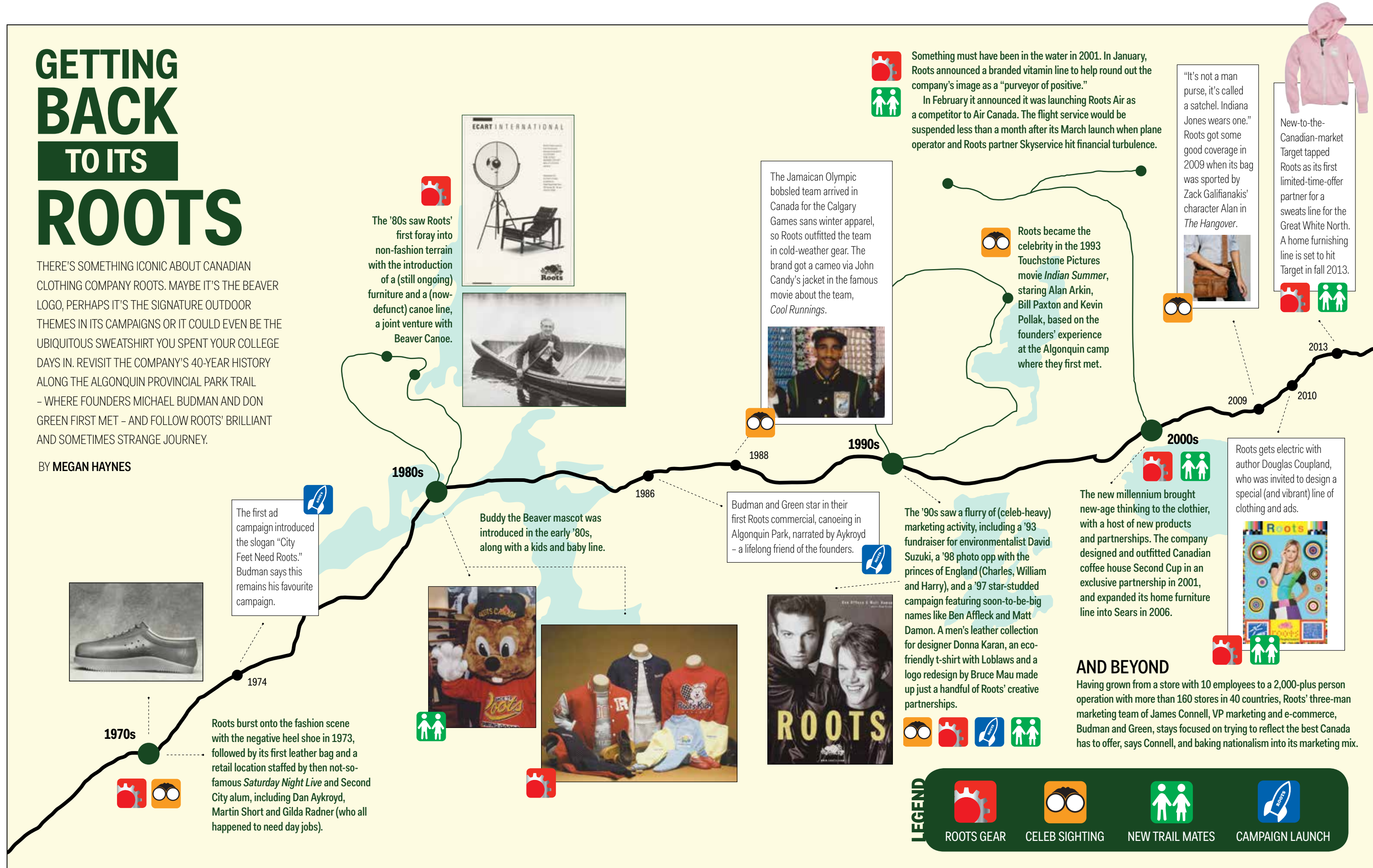


# GETTING BACK TO ITS ROOTS

THERE'S SOMETHING ICONIC ABOUT CANADIAN CLOTHING COMPANY ROOTS. MAYBE IT'S THE BEAVER LOGO, PERHAPS IT'S THE SIGNATURE OUTDOOR THEMES IN ITS CAMPAIGNS OR IT COULD EVEN BE THE UBIQUITOUS SWEATSHIRT YOU SPENT YOUR COLLEGE DAYS IN. REVISIT THE COMPANY'S 40-YEAR HISTORY ALONG THE ALGONQUIN PROVINCIAL PARK TRAIL - WHERE FOUNDERS MICHAEL BUDMAN AND DON GREEN FIRST MET - AND FOLLOW ROOTS' BRILLIANT AND SOMETIMES STRANGE JOURNEY.

BY MEGAN HAYNES



1970s

Roots burst onto the fashion scene with the negative heel shoe in 1973, followed by its first leather bag and a retail location staffed by then not-so-famous *Saturday Night Live* and *Second City* alum, including Dan Aykroyd, Martin Short and Gilda Radner (who all happened to need day jobs).

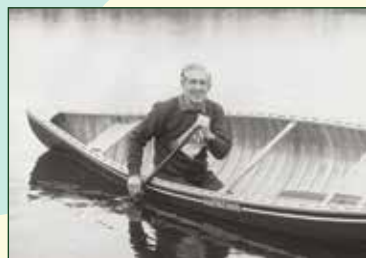
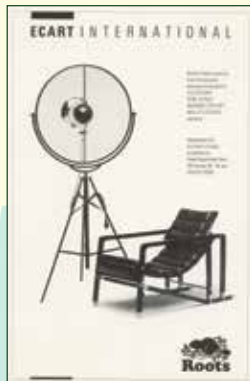


The first ad campaign introduced the slogan "City Feet Need Roots." Budman says this remains his favourite campaign.

1974

1980s

The '80s saw Roots' first foray into non-fashion terrain with the introduction of a (still ongoing) furniture and a (now-defunct) canoe line, a joint venture with Beaver Canoe.

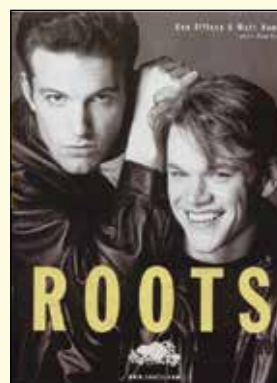


Buddy the Beaver mascot was introduced in the early '80s, along with a kids and baby line.



1986

Budman and Green star in their first Roots commercial, canoeing in Algonquin Park, narrated by Aykroyd - a lifelong friend of the founders.



1988

The Jamaican Olympic bobsled team arrived in Canada for the Calgary Games sans winter apparel, so Roots outfitted the team in cold-weather gear. The brand got a cameo via John Candy's jacket in the famous movie about the team, *Cool Runnings*.



1990s

The '90s saw a flurry of (celeb-heavy) marketing activity, including a '93 fundraiser for environmentalist David Suzuki, a '98 photo opp with the princes of England (Charles, William and Harry), and a '97 star-studded campaign featuring soon-to-be-big names like Ben Affleck and Matt Damon. A men's leather collection for designer Donna Karan, an eco-friendly t-shirt with Loblaws and a logo redesign by Bruce Mau made up just a handful of Roots' creative partnerships.



LEGEND



ROOTS GEAR



CELEB SIGHTING



NEW TRAIL MATES



CAMPAIGN LAUNCH



Roots became the celebrity in the 1993 Touchstone Pictures movie *Indian Summer*, starring Alan Arkin, Bill Paxton and Kevin Pollak, based on the founders' experience at the Algonquin camp where they first met.



"It's not a man purse, it's called a satchel. Indiana Jones wears one." Roots got some good coverage in 2009 when its bag was sported by Zack Galifianakis' character Alan in *The Hangover*.



New-to-the-Canadian-market Target tapped Roots as its first limited-time-offer partner for a sweats line for the Great White North. A home furnishing line is set to hit Target in fall 2013.



2009

2010

2013

The new millennium brought new-age thinking to the clothier, with a host of new products and partnerships. The company designed and outfitted Canadian coffee house *Second Cup* in an exclusive partnership in 2001, and expanded its home furniture line into *Sears* in 2006.

Roots gets electric with author Douglas Coupland, who was invited to design a special (and vibrant) line of clothing and ads.



## AND BEYOND

Having grown from a store with 10 employees to a 2,000-plus person operation with more than 160 stores in 40 countries, Roots' three-man marketing team of James Connell, VP marketing and e-commerce, Budman and Green, stays focused on trying to reflect the best Canada has to offer, says Connell, and baking nationalism into its marketing mix.