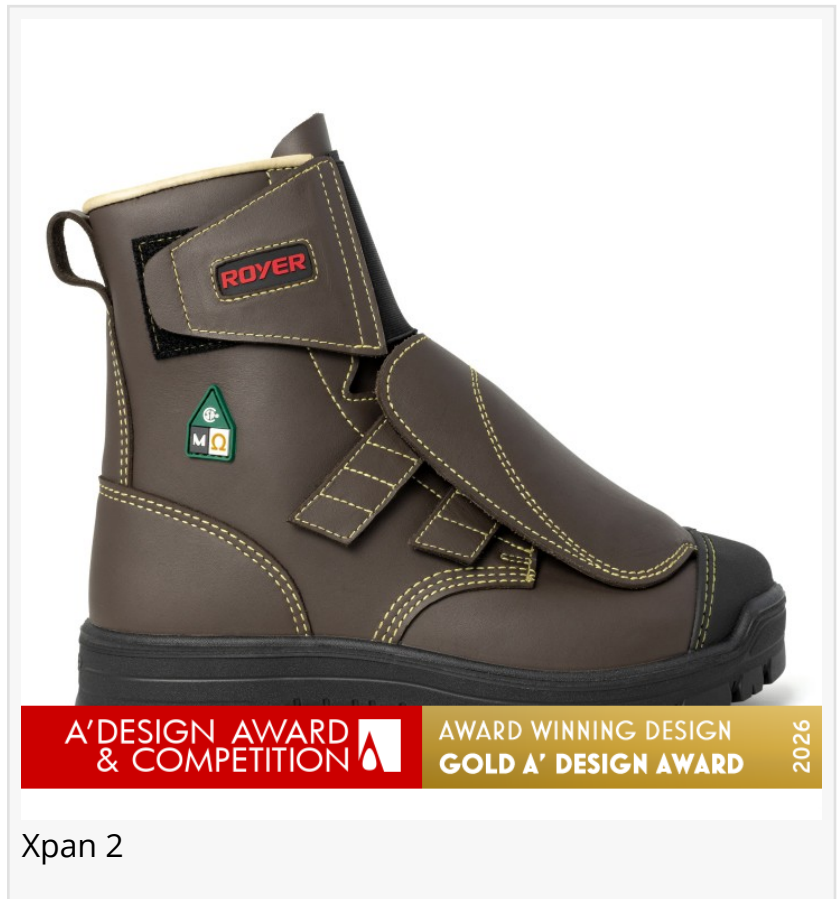


Xpan 2 Work Boot by Francis Lacroix Wins Gold at A' Design Award

Royer Work Boot Xpan 2 Recognized for Advanced Thermal Protection in Molten Metal Environments

COMO, CO, ITALY, September 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The A' Design Award has announced Xpan 2, a work boot developed by [Francis Lacroix](#) for Royer, as a Gold winner in the Safety Clothing and Personal [Protective Equipment](#) Design category. The A' Design Award is one of the most highly esteemed and well-recognized design recognitions within the protective equipment field, evaluating entries through a rigorous, blind peer-review process conducted by an expert jury panel. This Gold A' Design Award distinction acknowledges the technical merit and design quality demonstrated by Xpan 2 in addressing the demanding requirements of high-risk metallurgy settings. The recognition positions Xpan 2 among a select group of designs assessed against established criteria for innovation, safety, and durability.



Xpan 2

The A' Safety Clothing and Personal Protective Equipment Design Award holds relevance not only for Francis Lacroix and Royer but also for the broader industry and the professionals who rely on dependable protective footwear. Xpan 2 responds to a persistent industry need: balancing extreme thermal protection with reduced weight and sustained comfort. By advancing how thermal barriers integrate with shock absorption, the design aligns with current industry standards for occupational safety in metal processing. Workers in foundries, heavy manufacturing, and aluminum processing stand to benefit from enhanced foot protection without compromising mobility. The design demonstrates how rigorous research and development can translate into measurable practical value for end users.

Xpan 2 features a sole architecture in which a heat and flame resistant rubber outsole encapsulates nearly the entire polyurethane midsole, leaving only a slight contour. This integrated construction forms a thermal barrier while preserving shock absorption and keeping overall weight low. The tread employs a dynamic chevron pattern engineered to enhance forward traction and stability, drawing inspiration from the aerodynamic geometry of the CF-105 Arrow developed by Avro Canada. The design resists heat, slips, and abrasion across high-risk industrial conditions, including full immersion in liquid aluminum exceeding 1,000 degrees Celsius. These attributes establish Xpan 2 as a notable reference point in molten metal safety footwear.

The Gold A' Design Award recognition may serve as a foundation for future development at Royer, encouraging continued exploration of advanced materials and construction techniques in protective footwear. The achievement reflects the value of the five-phase Stage-Gate research methodology applied throughout the project and may inform subsequent designs intended for demanding industrial sectors. For the design team, this distinction provides motivation to pursue further innovation in occupational safety while maintaining a commitment to protection, comfort, and durability.

Project Members

Xpan 2 was realized through the collaboration of a multidisciplinary team. Simon La Rochelle served as sponsor and Francis Lacroix led the project as Innovation Director. Vincent Blais contributed as Product Developer, while Elyzabeth Bouchard managed the project. Etienne Sirois oversaw operations as Operations Director, and Brittaney La Penna and Simon Turk served as Production Technicians. Benedetto Scarnera and Felice Scarnera of SFB Srl provided technical partnership throughout the development.

Interested parties may learn more about Xpan 2, view its design details, and discover the team behind it at the dedicated page on the A' Design Award website.

<https://competition.adesignaward.com/ada-winner-design.php?ID=182031>

About Francis Lacroix

Francis Lacroix is a designer from Canada with a focus on work and military footwear, dedicated to improving the safety and performance of people working in critical and demanding environments. As Innovation Director, Lacroix has contributed to the development of technical footwear solutions through research-driven design processes. The work reflects a sustained commitment to protection, comfort, and durability for users operating in high-risk industrial sectors.

About Royer

Founded in 1934, Royer is a Canadian manufacturer specializing in the design of high-performance work footwear. Headquartered in Sherbrooke, Quebec, the company develops technical boots for a wide range of industrial sectors, including construction, heavy

manufacturing, natural resources, and public safety, with a portfolio of more than 250 models distributed across all continents. Royer integrates research, material testing, and user-centered design into its development process, addressing functional requirements such as protection, comfort, robustness, and sustainability. The company operates multiple manufacturing facilities in Canada and maintains a structured approach to production through continuous laboratory and field testing with end users. With a longstanding industrial heritage, Royer contributes to the evolution of occupational safety by aligning design, performance, and compliance with contemporary workplace needs.

About the Gold A' Design Award Recognition

The Gold A' Design Award is granted to designs that demonstrate a high level of innovation and a significant impact on their intended audience. Recognized as a notable achievement by the A' [Design Awards](#), these designs reflect a visionary approach and the considerable skill of their creators. Within the Safety Clothing and Personal Protective Equipment Design category, entries are evaluated against criteria including innovation in protective equipment design, user safety assurance, ergonomic consideration, durability and longevity, material quality and sustainability, comfort and wearability, efficiency in protection, and compliance with standards. Gold A' Design Award designs serve as benchmarks that advance the boundaries of design and technology, encouraging further innovation. The distinction recognizes works that deliver meaningful value and contribute to improved standards within their field.

About A' Design Award

The A' Safety Clothing and Personal Protective Equipment Design Award is one of the highly esteemed design competitions in the protective equipment industry, offering companies, brands, designers, and design agencies an opportunity to showcase their creativity and gain international recognition. Entries are blind peer-reviewed and assessed by a world-class jury panel of design professionals, protective equipment industry experts, journalists, and academics based on pre-established evaluation criteria. Organized across all industries and open to entries from all countries, the A' Design Award has operated since 2008 and is now in its 18th year. The ultimate aim of the A' Design Award is to recognize and promote superior products and projects that advance and benefit society, driven by a philanthropic mission to create a better world through the power of good design. Interested parties may learn more about the A' Design Awards, explore the jury members, view past laureates, and take part with their projects at the following url: <https://protectiveequipmentaward.com>

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