

One day with...the Habitat Quest

Size

Because of the rather narrow cut, the Habitat Quest runs about half a size smaller than most other models.

Durability

The one-piece toebox design of the Habitat Quest, combined with the distance of the laces from the front area of the shoe, to reduce their contact with the griptape, is advantageous for the durability of the shoe. However, the black canvas edge band, where the toebox and sidepanel meet is a weak spot. It frays out very quickly and seems to weaken the stitching in this area.

The canvas sidepanel, which allows a minimum amount of breathability, is recessed behind the layer of olive suede, so it's protected from the abrasive griptape.



The durability of the sole has strong and weak points. The rubber compound used for the sole is very soft and, therefore, not as resistant to abrasion as comparable soles. The side areas wear down especially fast – after the five-hour test, the edge between sole and upper material had already worn down. At least the medium-deep sole pattern should mean that it takes the whole life span of the shoe for the sole to wear down completely.

Cushion

Much like the Converse CTS or the Nike SB Janoski, the Habitat Quest features a very thin, vulcanised sole. Of course, this allows a lot of boardfeel, but especially in the forefoot area, it is so thin that it can be painful if you bail tricks. The extra-thick insole – about one-and-a-half times as thick as regular insoles – compensates for the lack of cushioning, but it's still not enough to mean the Quest can be recommended for high-impact skating. Its real strength, the direct contact between foot and board, is more suited for low-impact skating, where the lack of cushioning isn't as much of an issue.



Breathability

Unfortunately, the possibility for air and moisture exchange between the inside and outside of the shoe is very limited. The Habitat Quest doesn't feature any ventilation holes or mesh panels, but the canvas parts of the side panel are slightly breathable.

The very thin upper, and lack of cushioning material in the collar and the tongue, means that the shoe isn't insulated that well, so at least the heat that develops within the shoe while skating isn't trapped inside. This doesn't support the breathability directly, but allows the feet to cool down faster, so not as much sweat develops in the first place.

Shape

The toebox of the Habitat Quest features a Vans Chukka Low-inspired shape. Compared with the Vans model, it is slimmer and not as bulky, so would especially suit people with narrow or medium-width feet. As always, it's best to try them on in your local store to test whether your feet are suited for this particular model.



Boardfeel

One of the biggest strengths of the Quest is the extraordinary direct contact between board and foot. As you can see in the cross section, the vulcanised sole is as thin as possible. Combined with the low-profile insole in the forefoot area, there's just the minimum amount of material between deck and foot, which results in great boardfeel.

Grip

As with most vulcanised shoes, the Habitat Quest doesn't require any time to wear in – it is grippy and flexible right out of the box. The classic herringbone pattern of the majority of the sole provides excellent grip, which is supported by the thin and flexible construction of the sole that adapts perfectly to the shape of the deck. Although the structure is finer than comparable herringbone patterns of other brands, its medium depth fits with the expected durability of the upper and should last over the whole lifespan of the shoe.



Comfort

Although the Habitat Quest features only minimal padding in the collar and the tongue, it manages to offer enough comfort for daily sessions. After several hours of skating, though, the lack of cushioning in the sole is noticeable, with the feet becoming tired faster than they would in a more padded model with a thicker cupsole construction, for example.

A positive aspect concerning the comfort is that there's only minimal stitching on the inner lining, so there are no hot spots that could cause blisters. Also, the collar is very soft so it doesn't interfere with the Achilles tendon.

Stability and Support

A general weakness of the Quest is its lack of support and stability. The thin, small plastic reinforcement in the heel is quite soft and, combined with the thin sidepanels, which lost most of their rigidity after the five-hour test, the shoe isn't able to prevent horizontal movement of the foot inside it. The low cut and the bendable collar are further reasons for the lack of support. If laced tightly to the top hole, the shoe is able to provide more stability, so this general weakness can be reduced. In general, the shoe would be best for skaters who like the maximum freedom of ankle movement and that attach great importance to an outstanding boardfeel. People who need support in the ankle region should have a closer look at the mid-cut versions of the Habitat collection, for example the Ibex Mid, which should be able to offer more stability than the Quest.

Summary

The Habitat Quest is a basic, thin, vulcanised model with a lack of support and medium durability, but with outstanding boardfeel, grip and flick.