

HUF Southern check-out

If a skate shoe design is considered a classic, chances are it skates quite well. There has to be a reason why certain silhouettes or lines have prevailed against the test of time. They might grow slightly out of fashion, but always manage to stick around. One of those classics is the Vans Old Skool.

However, just cause a design is renowned as a classic, doesn't mean there isn't room for improvement. As such, the HUF Southern is a new take of a classic design. The toebox resemblance is obvious, but the HUF interpretation brings some fresh flavor to the table, regarding both the overall shape of the shoe, as well as the most obvious feature: the leather patch in the Ollie-area. A direct comparison with the Vans Old Skool might seem tempting, but the Southern deserves the full attention in the following review.

The HUF Southern fits true to size.

The most noticeable feature first: The leather patch that is sewn onto the suede upper assures outstanding durability in the Ollie-area of the shoe.



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The big, triple-stitched toebox panel seems to wear out at the seams at first, but the heavy leather will take most of the abrasion once the suede is worn down a little. During the test time of approximately 5 hours no clear points of attack developed and the suede proved to be of high quality and held up well. The rigid and thick leather patch is a great idea to combat wear and improve durability for many skateboarders' most sensitive area regarding shoes and additionally supports the connecting panels of the shoe. In comparison, the bottom- and midsole seems to be the Achilles heel of the HUF Southern. The soft rubber compound was noticeably worn down in comparison with the upper.



The edge between upper and sole is almost gone in certain areas and the bottom sole shows the development of first flat areas. The reduced durability is the price to pay for the outstanding grip and flexibility the sole unit itself offers. The Southern features the typical sticky vulc grip and flick that provides great traction and allows much control while doing flip tricks.

The flexibility goes hand in hand with the offered board-feel. The shoe adapts well to the concave of the deck, which results in maximum interference. The thin front area allows a direct connection to the board, while the thicker heel area of the removable insole dampens landings and bails. Nevertheless, it is a thin model and the cushioning abilities are limited to lower impact skating.



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The silhouette of the Southern is low and close to the foot. The minimal heel padding and the unpadded tongue are comfortable and allow a direct connection between foot and shoe. The toebox is the widest in the first third - approximately at the leather patch - and tapers fast towards a pointy toe.

For such a young skate shoe company, HUF delivers outstanding craftsmanship that can easily compete with the big names. Every stitch line is tidy, the vulcanized sole unit didn't separate in any area after the first sessions and the suede is of high quality. The common, yet slightly outdated tongue centering straps are replaced in favor of a lace loop on top of the tongue. This, in combination with the limited use of stitching within the shoe, makes the inner lining very comfortable to wear. However, a flaw in regards to comfort is the weight of the Southern. It appears to be quite heavy, even for a vulcanized model.

Structured support and vulcanized models are somewhat of a contradiction. Still, some brands are able to make it work better than others. In this case with the Southern, HUF seems to be one of them.. Although the collar is quite flexible and the cut around the ankle is rather low, the shoe is still able to provide a secure feeling while skating. One of the reasons might be the bigger footprint and the solid width of the toebox in combination with a low center of gravity. The ankles subjectively seem less likely to roll. In conclusion, the HUF Southern seems to offer an advantage regarding the stability due to its bigger width for a minimally padded vulc model.

Summary

The HUF Southern is a slim and solid vulcanized shoe. It features increased Ollie-area durability, good boardfeel, grip and craftsmanship. Minor flaws are the weight and the only average durability of the sole unit.

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