

By Association *Only.*

Setting a New Standard for Luxury Ecommerce on Shopify —

An interview with P448



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Executive Summary

In an increasingly competitive digital landscape, premium brands require ecommerce experiences that do more than facilitate transactions. They must communicate identity, foster emotional connection, and provide the flexibility needed to support continuous innovation.

For P448, a global footwear brand known for its creative spirit and community-driven ethos, its previous ecommerce platform had become a constraint rather than an enabler. Technical limitations, an outdated user experience, and fragmented operational processes prevented the brand from fully expressing its identity online and scaling in line with its ambitions.

This interview tells the story of how P448 partnered with By Association Only to reimagine its digital flagship on Shopify 2.0.

Speaking with Brand President Lori Sigismondo and Digital Designer and Experience Lead Francesca Roncari, we explore how strategic planning, progressive design, advanced Shopify engineering, and a collaborative partnership created a flexible, scalable ecommerce platform that elevated the brand experience. It also strengthened storytelling, and supported P448's long-term growth.

The resulting storefront has been recognised by Shopify and the wider digital design community as a benchmark for innovation in ecommerce. In 2025, By Association Only was named the recipient of Shopify's Build Award for our work with the sneaker brand.

The Interviewees



Lori Sigismondo

Brand President at P448

Lori Sigismondo joined P448 in 2018 as Chief Marketing Officer, where she quickly became a transformative force for the brand. She was promoted to Brand President in 2025, leading global strategy with a focus on innovation, partnerships, and sustainability.

Before P448, she spent a decade at Stuart Weitzman, ultimately serving as Vice President of Marketing. She began her career on the legal team at Burberry, building her foundation in the luxury fashion industry.



Francesca Roncari

Digital Designer and Experience Lead at P448

Francesca Roncari joined P448 in 2022 as a Web Designer, contributing to the brand’s digital evolution.

In 2024, she became Digital Designer and Experience Lead, leading the redesign and relaunch of the global website from concept to execution, blending strategic UI/UX vision with hands-on creative direction.

Before P448, Roncari spent ten years in Milan shaping digital experiences in the luxury sector. She worked as a UI/UX Designer at Qwentes on projects for premium brands, including Fendi, before joining Dolce&Gabbana as a Digital Designer, where she managed global ecommerce and digital communication initiatives.

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Introducing P448

Italian shoe brand P448 was founded in 2014. It creates forward-thinking footwear inspired by communities of artists, athletes, musicians and changemakers.

Favouring feelings over fads, the company crafts pieces that transcend trends and encourage self-expression, constantly looking at fashion from new perspectives.

As well as a commitment to using the finest craftsmanship, P448 champions ecologically friendly materials – including recycled, regenerative and bio-based fabrics and fibres – and sustainable processes.





The Challenge

P448 approached By Association Only to elevate the brand’s digital presence and create a modern aesthetic.

The shoe maker wanted its site to mirror P448’s ethos for breaking the barriers of fashion, with a unique, diverse and uncommon design that is still unquestionably functional and aligns with its physical stores.

Increasing brand awareness through storytelling was also an essential part of the brief, with a flexible homepage structure to offer innovative editorial and shoppable modules, with animations and interactive components playing key roles.

Consolidating the existing tech stack was also important to the brand.

What were the biggest challenges you were facing at that time?

“We were facing challenges across three key areas: technology, user experience, and organisational alignment,” says Roncari.

“From a technical perspective, the site was running on an older version of Shopify rather than Shopify 2.0.”

“From a UX standpoint, the website no longer reflected P448’s identity. It felt more like a generic marketplace than a premium fashion destination, creating a disconnect between the online experience and the brand’s positioning, values, and community.”

“The business was also evolving quickly, with new products, collaborations, and initiatives constantly emerging. That made it difficult to create a clear, cohesive customer journey while showcasing everything the brand had to offer,” adds Sigismondo.

“Organisationally, responsibilities were split across marketing, ecommerce, and external partners, while team changes made alignment challenging. Agency support also lacked the agility needed to keep pace with the business.”

How did those challenges impact your brand or growth ambitions?

“These challenges directly limited our ability to grow the brand digitally and support broader business ambitions,” says Roncari.

“The platform’s limitations made it difficult to move at the pace of the business. Launching new features, improving the customer experience, and testing new ideas was slow and complex, restricting growth and our ability to respond to evolving customer expectations.”

“From a brand perspective, the website didn’t reflect P448’s premium positioning. The experience felt more like a marketplace than a luxury fashion destination, making it difficult to communicate the quality, craftsmanship, and uniqueness of our products.

“Performance issues also created a less polished and trusted experience, impacting customer confidence and conversion.”

“Ultimately, there was a disconnect between how we wanted customers to perceive the brand and what they experienced online. To strengthen our premium positioning and support international growth, the website needed to become more than a transactional platform – it had to better express P448’s values, storytelling, community, and distinctive identity.”

What stood out to you when selecting a partner for this project?

“What stood out immediately was the agency’s ability to





combine high-end design thinking with strong technical expertise,” says Roncari. “We wanted to create a site that felt young, dynamic, and innovative, and needed a partner willing to push the boundaries of what was possible on Shopify.”

“Your team showed a strong understanding of both brand experience and ecommerce performance. Through a collaborative approach, clear communication, and strategic thinking, you translated our vision into a scalable, high-performing platform.”

“We felt confident that you understood not only how the site should look, but also how it needed to function to support the business and create meaningful customer experiences.”

What were you hoping to find in an agency that you hadn’t found elsewhere?

“We were looking for a partner that felt like an extension of our team, especially as the redesign aligned with a broader evolution of our digital brand identity,” says Roncari.

“While your portfolio demonstrated strong design and technical capabilities, what truly set By Association Only apart was your approach to work. From the get go the collaboration felt open and genuine –

you challenged ideas when needed, brought strategic thinking, and approached every conversation with curiosity and care.”

“Nothing felt constrained by rigid processes. Ideas were explored and refined together, creating a true sense of partnership. That combination of creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration gave us confidence that we were building something ambitious with a fully invested team.”

Can you describe the vision you had for the new website?

“Our vision was to create a website that not only drove conversion but also told the P448 story in a richer, more engaging way,” says Sigismondo. “The previous site functioned mainly as a product catalogue, with limited ability to communicate the brand’s identity, values, and personality.”

“We wanted the new experience to feel modern, clean, and premium, while still incorporating playful, unexpected details that reflect P448’s creativity. It also needed the flexibility to support tailored experiences for product launches, collaborations, and campaigns.”

“A key inspiration was the physical retail experience, where immersive elements like sneaker walls made

discovery more engaging. We aimed to translate that sense of exploration into digital, creating a site that felt less like traditional ecommerce and more like an extension of the brand.”

“We also wanted to give customers multiple ways to browse – whether by collection, storytelling, or direct product discovery – while keeping the experience intuitive and cohesive.”

How important is the balance between design and technology in your ecommerce strategy?

“The balance between design and technology is critical: design creates the first impression and expresses the brand, while technology ensures the experience performs, scales, and converts,” says Roncari.

“Neither works in isolation. Strong design without a solid technical foundation limits growth, while strong technology without compelling design fails to create emotional connection.”

Sigismondo agrees. “In the redesign, our goal was to bring both together – creating a distinctive, premium experience that was also fast, flexible, and easy tonavigate. In the first phase, we deliberately pushed brand expression further, even if it felt more niche. As the business grows, the focus is on evolving that experience to remain true to the brand’s high-end identity while becoming more accessible and intuitive for a broader audience.”



The Solution

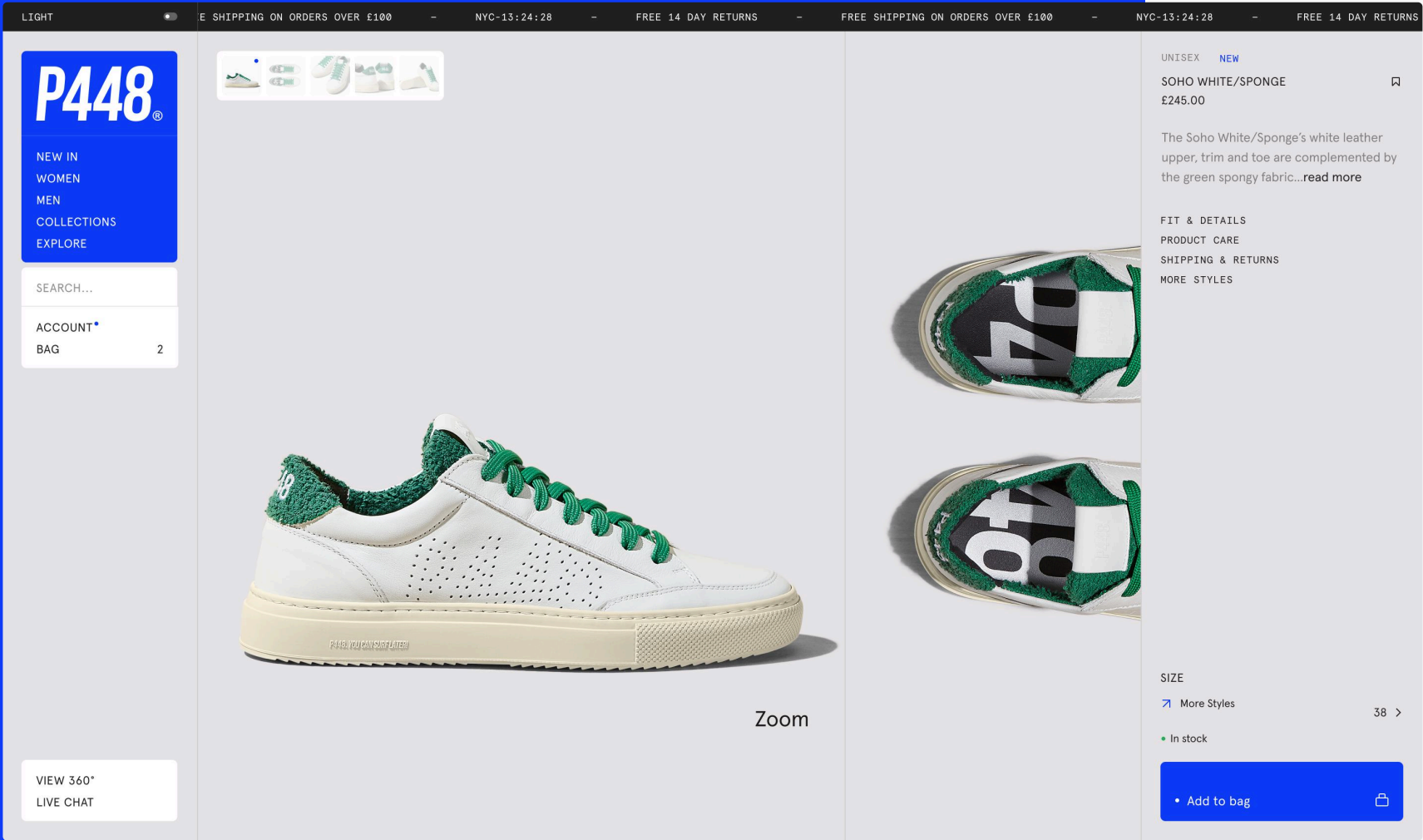
Design

Joe Trippett, Co-Founder and Creative
Director at By Association Only

“From the outset, our ambition was not simply to redesign the P448 website, but to create a digital flagship that felt as distinctive as the brand itself while remaining intuitive, accessible, and commercially effective.”

“A core principle was to create an experience that felt different without requiring customers to learn a new way of shopping. We aimed to challenge convention only where it added value, avoiding unnecessary friction.”



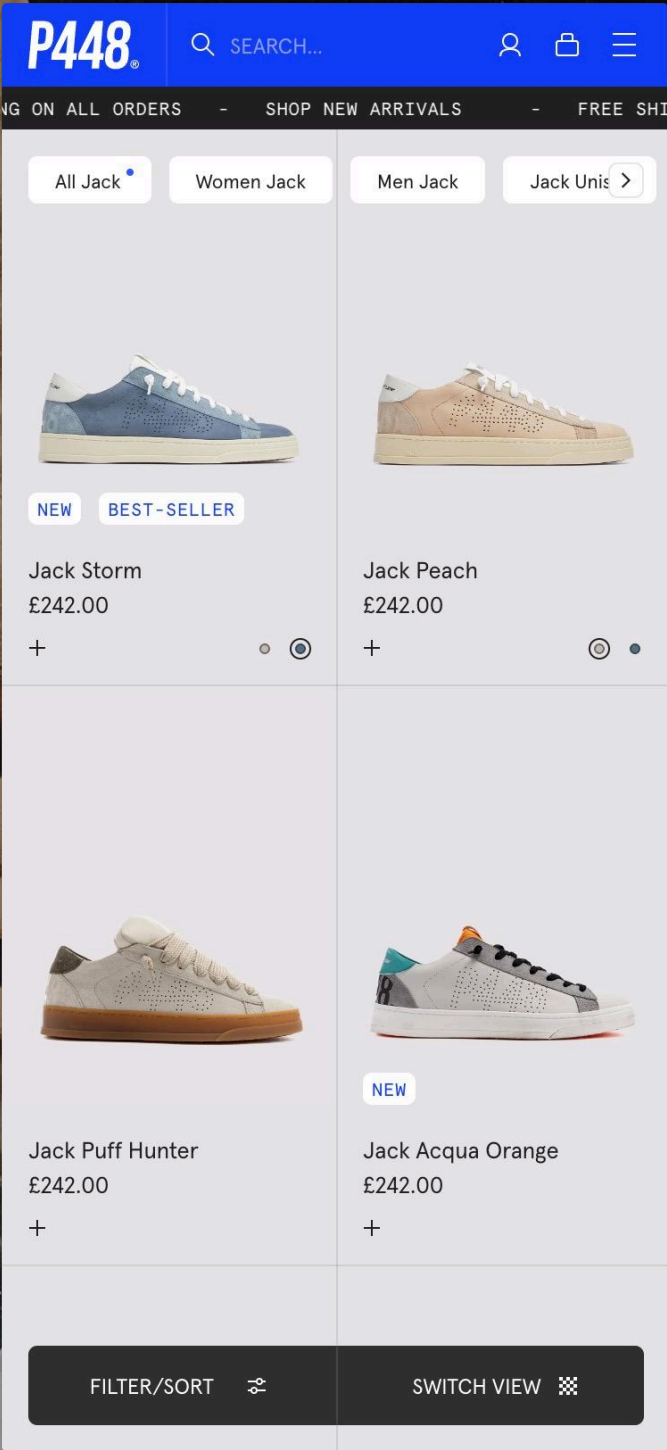


“A good example is the primary desktop navigation. Instead of a traditional ecommerce layout, it sits in a fixed left-hand container, creating a distinctive structure and enabling more immersive content. However, interaction patterns, terminology, and iconography remain familiar, ensuring the experience is immediately understandable.”

“This approach extends throughout the site. We introduced a system of drawers, overlays, and modals that surface information without disrupting the journey – whether for practical actions like filtering or for richer storytelling, such as sustainability content and product details.”

“The goal was to balance depth with clarity – allowing users to browse quickly or engage more deeply, depending on intent, without overwhelming either experience.”

“Ultimately, we didn’t just design a website – we designed a system. Its value lies in its ongoing flexibility, allowing the brand to move quickly, adapt, and evolve while maintaining consistency.”



“The project shows that strong ecommerce design is not about choosing between creativity and performance, but building a framework where storytelling, experience, and commercial goals coexist – resulting in a platform as expressive and individual as the brand itself.”

“A key focus was also on building a flexible content ecosystem. As P448’s storytelling needs evolve through campaigns, collaborations, and initiatives, fixed templates would quickly become limiting. Instead, we built a modular design system that enables the team to create tailored experiences without relying on development support.”

“Ultimately, we didn’t just design a website – we designed a system. Its value lies in its ongoing flexibility, allowing the brand to move quickly, adapt, and evolve while maintaining consistency.”

“The project’s success was rooted in collaboration. P448 brought deep brand and customer insight, while we contributed expertise in UX, ecommerce strategy, and design. Continuous dialogue allowed ideas to be refined and strengthened together.”

“That trust ensured the outcome was not a compromise between brand and usability, but a solution where both reinforce each other.”

“The project shows that strong ecommerce design is not about choosing between creativity and performance, but building a framework where storytelling, experience, and commercial goals coexist – resulting in a platform as expressive and individual as the brand itself.”



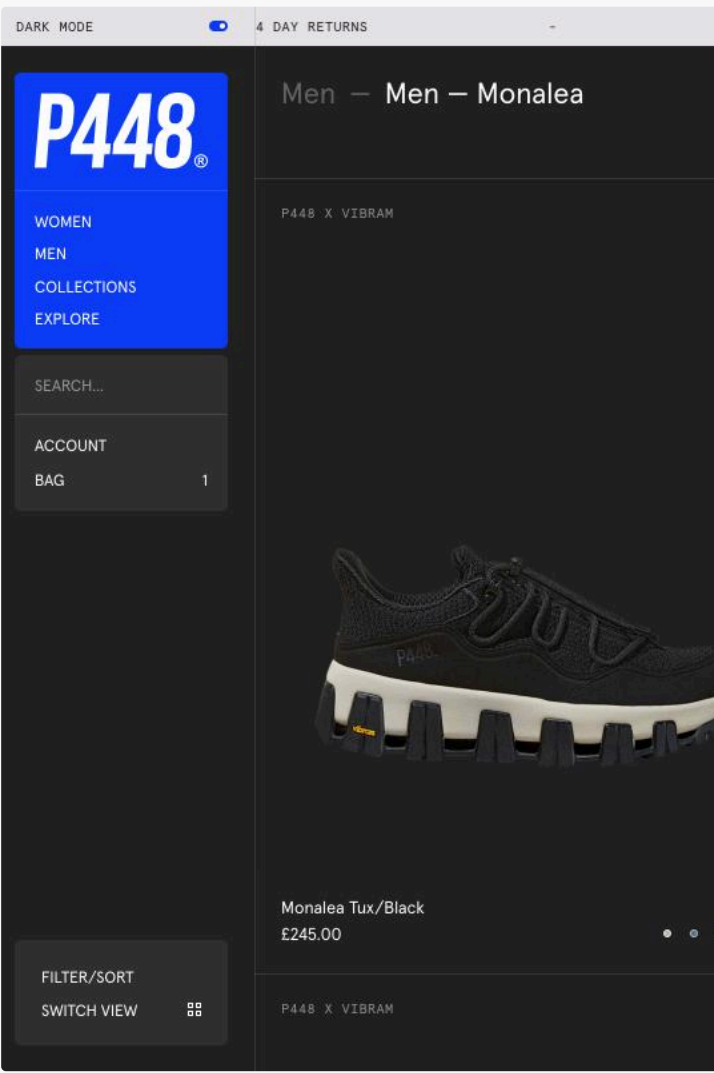
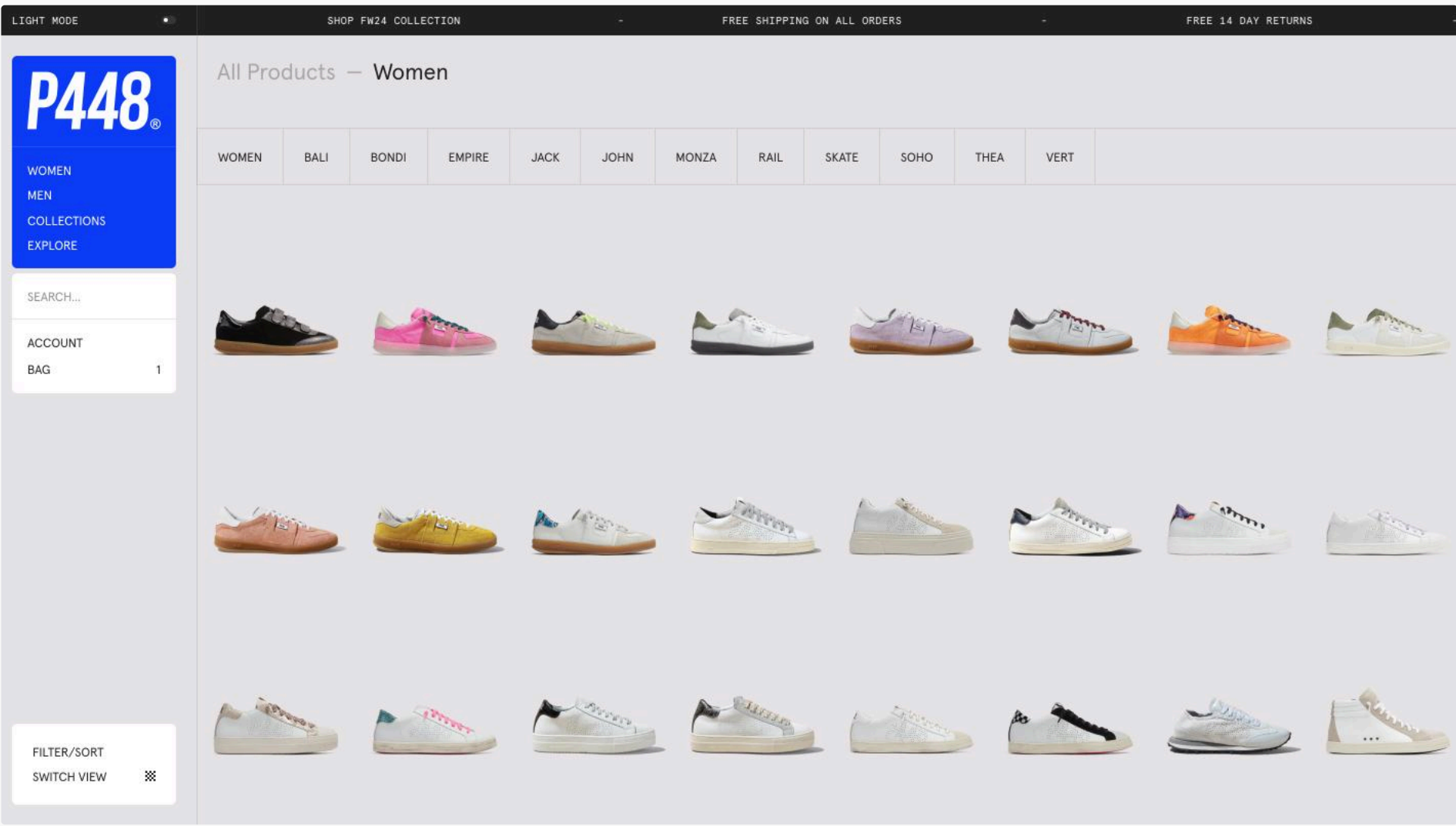
Development

Simon Bird, Frontend Lead Developer at
By Association Only

“From a development perspective, a creative project like this can be built in many ways, each with trade-offs. Our approach was to maximise flexibility while protecting the design integrity and keeping the admin experience simple and intuitive, supported by clear guidance from the client.”

“For projects like P448, it’s not enough to build something visually aligned with the design – we also placed equal importance on the content management experience. The goal was to give enough flexibility for different pages and collaborators to express unique ideas, while maintaining structure, consistency, and ease of use across the site.”

“Much of this depends on strong foundations set early in the build. For example, with a left-aligned navigation system, we had to define how different sections interact with that layout before anything else.’



“For projects like P448, it’s not enough to build something visually aligned with the design – we also placed equal importance on the content management experience.”

“Some sections treat the full viewport as usable space, others treat the navigation column as a fixed boundary, while others – like split layouts – allow media to extend into that area. These behaviours needed to work seamlessly without requiring the client to manage complex settings.”

“Navigation behaviour was another key consideration. While it would have been simpler to make dropdowns click-activated, the experience relied on effortless exploration. We therefore designed hover interactions that respond predictably as users move between navigation and content areas, avoiding frustration or premature closing states. This level of precision is

often invisible, but essential to creating a smooth experience.”

“For collections, we supported multiple layout variations, including different product card treatments. Rather than creating separate templates for each, we built a shared system where changes to core components and top-level classes dynamically alter appearance.”

“This keeps the system maintainable, avoids duplication, and ensures updates are consistent across all layouts. Layout switching is instant, with subtle animation added to smooth the transition and

maintainthe brand feel. User preference is also stored so the experience remains consistent across sessions.”

“Performance was a further priority. Instead of relying on third-party libraries for effects such as parallax, horizontal scrolling, or ticker animations, we built them in vanilla JavaScript. This reduces bloat, improves performance, and gives us full control over behaviour – making the system easier to maintain, extend, and adapt over time.”



The Debrief



What were the biggest obstacles during the redesign and build process?

“The biggest challenge was time. The timeline was extremely ambitious – we shared the initial design brief in February and were already populating the new site and preparing for launch by the summer,” replies Sigismondo.

“This wasn’t just a redesign, but a full rethinking of the digital experience: evolving the brand’s online identity, migrating to a new technical foundation, and building a platform designed for future growth. Coordinating all of this in parallel required significant effort and alignment across teams.”

“Despite the pressure, the project stayed focused on the broader vision. It demanded flexibility, fast decision-making, and close collaboration throughout. While challenging, it was also highly rewarding, and we’re grateful for the commitment and dedication shown by your team.”

What was your experience like collaborating with our team throughout the project?

“It was an exceptional experience,” replies Roncari. “It never felt like working with an external agency, but rather one integrated team focused on creating a memorable ecommerce experience for P448.”

“Communication was open, transparent, and constructive throughout. Ideas were discussed freely, challenges were tackled together, and even the most ambitious requests were met with a solution-oriented mindset.”

“What stood out most was the energy and enthusiasm across the project. Despite its scale and complexity, the positive attitude and strong collaboration made the process enjoyable from start to finish and were key to its success.”



The Results

What’s your favourite part of the new site?

“From a day-to-day perspective, my favourite part is the flexibility of the platform and the component library we built together,” says Roncari. “The components are highly interactive and visually impactful, creating endless opportunities to build engaging content and tell our story in new ways.”

“Another highlight is the materials library with shoppable tags, which offers a unique way to showcase products, craftsmanship, and materials while creating a richer storytelling experience.”

Do you feel the new site enabled new possibilities for your brand?

“Absolutely,” says Sigismondo. “The new site has fundamentally changed how we work by removing previous technical limitations and giving us the freedom to bring creative and digital ideas to life more easily.”

“A key impact has been the ability to tell our story in a more meaningful way. We can now guide customers through the brand using richer content, video, and immersive experiences that weren’t possible before. It has also made it easier to communicate areas like sustainability more engagingly and authentically.”

What impact did the new website have on your business after launch?

“The impact was immediate across multiple areas of the business,” continues Sigismondo. “From a brand perspective, the new site elevated our digital presence, moving away from a marketplace feel to a more premium, trustworthy experience for customers.”

“Beyond aesthetics, it strengthened storytelling, engagement, and brand differentiation. It allows us to present products and values in a way that better reflects the brand’s quality, while giving us the flexibility to evolve as the business grows.”

How did your customers respond to the new experience?

“The response from our customers was overwhelmingly positive,” says Sigismondo. “In our user surveys, the vast majority of customers rated the new experience between 7 and 10 out of 10, which gave us strong validation that the new direction was resonating with our audience.”

“A small percentage of users indicated that they would have preferred a more traditional, less dynamic website. However, that feedback aligned with our expectations. At the time, we were intentionally designing for a younger, more niche audience and wanted to create an experience that stood out from conventional ecommerce sites.”

“As our business evolves and we expand to a broader audience, we continue to evaluate and refine certain patterns and interactions to improve accessibility and inclusivity. The goal is to make the experience work for more people while preserving the distinctive identity that has always defined our brand.”



Site Recognition

By Association Only was named the recipient of **Shopify’s 2025 Build Award**, recognised for our industry-leading work with P448.

Presented annually by Shopify, the Build Award celebrates the most exceptional use of Liquid on the platform. Selected as the standout Liquid build of 2025, the P448 storefront was recognised for its technical sophistication, creative ambition, and seamless user experience.

The award was presented by Shopify President, Harley Finkelstein, to our Co-Founder and Managing Director, James Trippett, live on stage at Editions.Dev ’25, Shopify’s exclusive developer summit.

In a powerful endorsement of the project, Harley introduced the storefront by saying: “No matter which stack you use, Liquid or Hydrogen, this storefront sets the new standard.”

The P448 website has also received industry-wide recognition, including being awarded **Site of the Day by Awwwards** – marking the fourth time By Association Only has achieved this distinction.



“No matter which stack you use, Liquid or Hydrogen, this storefront sets the new standard.”

Harley Finkelstein — President of Shopify

“This custom storefront is a lesson in balance—clean design, strong brand identity, and smart performance optimizations. Built entirely in Shopify Liquid, the P448 site uses the full capabilities of the platform to create a seamless experience across devices. It’s visually striking, technically sound, and strategically structured.”

Shopify — 2025 Shopify Build Awards



Ongoing Partnership

After launch, what new challenges or opportunities emerged?

“The biggest opportunity was having the freedom to experiment and push creative boundaries. The challenge now is finding the right balance between maintaining our distinctive, innovative identity and creating an experience that is more accessible and inclusive for a broader global audience,” says Sigismondo.

How has our role evolved as your ecommerce partner over time?

“As our business evolves to reach a wider audience, you’ve become a trusted partner in helping us balance design, scalability, and accessibility – ensuring the experience remains engaging, effective, and aligned with growth goals,” replies Sigismondo.

“For example our ongoing optimisation work across key areas of the site, including PDPs, filtering, and navigation. These updates are improving usability and making the shopping journey more intuitive, while

preserving the distinctive brand identity we built together.”

What’s been most valuable about having an ongoing relationship rather than a one-off project?

“The most valuable aspect is your understanding not just of the website, but of our brand, business, and ongoing evolution. Each conversation brings new insight, and that exchange has been consistently valuable,” says Sigismondo.

“The ongoing partnership allows us to adapt strategy, optimise the experience, and grow in real time. Because you already understand our goals and challenges, we can move faster and make better decisions – something a one-off project wouldn’t allow.”

“You’re also always willing to bring the right expertise in when needed, even outside the original scope. That broader commitment to our success has been especially valuable.”

About By Association Only.

By Association Only (BAO) is the Platinum Shopify Plus agency for the world's most design-conscious luxury brands. It offers best-in-class design with a focus on innovation, performance and functionality.

BAO is a specialist ecommerce agency focused on delivering high-impact, high-value Shopify experiences for ambitious online merchants working in premium sectors.

With a focus on providing specialist ecommerce insight and consultancy, BAO delivers both isolated design projects and full-stack Shopify Plus development projects.

The agency was founded in 2010 and has a long and established track record in delivering successful digital projects for clients of all sizes. BAO specialises in design for the luxury, fashion, lifestyle and cosmetics sectors.

In addition to providing Shopify-specific design and development services, BAO also provides ongoing strategy and marketing services and delivers packages of work that combine all of these components in the form of ongoing retained services.