# Jeff Staple reflects on the creation of the iconic Nike Pigeon Dunk



Designer Jeff Staple has provided an in-depth look at the creation of one of sneaker culture's most iconic designs, the Nike Pigeon Dunk, in an exclusive interview with Daily Mail Business. This sneaker, released exclusively in New York City 20 years ago, has come to embody a pivotal moment in sneaker history, achieving a staggering resale price of over $131,000.

In this latest episode of "Obsession to Detail," Staple elaborates on the journey of developing the Pigeon Dunk, detailing how the project began when a colleague from Nike approached him about designing a shoe dedicated to the city in honour of the Dunk's anniversary year. "The brief was very simple, and this is the beautiful thing about working with Nike," Staple recalled. "Their briefs were like, 'Yeah, just make it dedicated to New York and be authentic.'"

At that time, Staple had recently established his namesake brand, which was six years old and lacked a mascot. Influenced by brands such as Ralph Lauren and Lacoste, he had considered incorporating an animal logo into his brand identity. Although he faced early resistance from his team who viewed pigeons unfavourably, he seized upon the opportunity presented by Nike to use the pigeon as a symbol for the Dunk.

Unlike his team’s suggestion of the Empire State Building, Staple's vision was to champion the pigeon, which he felt resonated more authentically with New York City character. "I want to create a shoe that's not for the bridge and tunnel crowd, that's not for the person who watches Sex and The City and thinks they know New York City," he stated. "I want to create a New York City Dunk for New Yorkers."

However, the production process was far from straightforward. Staple faced scepticism from Nike's board during the initial presentation of his design concept. Still, they ultimately placed their trust in him, allowing the project to move forward. He aimed to "take over" New York City in a way that mirrored the tenacity of the pigeon.

The launch event for the Pigeon Dunk took place at the Reed Space Store on the Lower East Side, where only 20 pairs were made available. The release stirred a frenzy, drawing over 100 eager customers and necessitating intervention from the NYPD due to the chaotic scene. Staple described the atmosphere as so intense that it crossed his mind there may have been a major incident, noting, "I thought there had been a bomb threat or something similar."

Raffle tickets intended to impose order ultimately failed to manage the crowd, with some individuals even arriving armed. "People came equipped just in case s\*\*t went down, and that was the release; it was insane," Staple recounted. The chaos left him feeling somewhat embarrassed as he perceived a loss of control over the situation.

In a lasting testament to the event's significance, the following morning's edition of The New York Post featured the headline "Sneaker Frenzy," marking what Staple considers a watershed moment in sneaker culture. February 22, 2005, is regarded by many as the day sneaker culture transcended subculture status to become a mainstream phenomenon, paving the way for what has since blossomed into a billion-dollar industry.

Reflecting on its lasting impact, Staple concluded, "Little did I know that twenty years later, it would be this thing that people are still talking about."

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.nssmag.com/en/fashion/18286/nike-dunk-sb-pigeon> - This article discusses the Nike Dunk SB Low Staple NYC Pigeon and its impact on sneaker culture. It highlights how the shoe was part of a limited 'City Pack' series and became a pivotal moment in transforming sneakers from a niche interest to a mainstream phenomenon.
* <https://www.nike.com/launch/t/behind-design-sb-dunk-staple-panda-pigeon> - This piece provides insight into Jeff Staple's involvement with Nike SB Dunks, including the process behind the 'Panda' version. It touches on how Staple's designs became iconic in sneaker culture.
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W1Iy-Jxxt8o> - This video features Jeff Staple explaining the design details of the Nike SB Dunk 'Panda Pigeon,' highlighting the evolution of his designs within the sneaker community.
* <https://www.nike.com/launch/t/behind-design-sb-dunk-staple-panda-pigeon> - Further discussion on Jeff Staple's contribution to sneaker culture and the creative process behind his Nike SB Dunk collaborations.