

# WellesleyWeston

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NICK GRACE/BOSTON RED SOX

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This page gives our readers the opportunity to express themselves creatively with writing, art, and photography. In this issue, Wellesley photographer John Harmon shares his photo of the beautiful new sculpture at the Wellesley Free Library.

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# Goody Two Shoes!

## Weston Entrepreneur Brings Fashion and Comfort Together

CHERYL BALIAN SCAPARROTTA **writer**

**if you're** someone who's comfortable in five-inch stilettos all day long, this article isn't for you.

But if you're in the other 99 percent of the female population that "feels the heels"—crushed toes, aching arches, and forced to affect an unsteady gait, all in the name of fashion—help has arrived.

"Quite simply, you don't want your feet to kill," says Sandra Powers Murphy, a Weston mother and businesswoman who has seemingly done the impossible: She's devised the perfect confluence of comfort and chic in footwear.

After years of navigating cobblestone-lined streets, dodging sidewalk grates, and enduring endless networking events in stylish but excruciatingly painful heels, Murphy's epiphany came on a business trip several years ago.

"After a particularly lengthy trip to New York, I was stranded in the rain with no taxis in sight and the last Boston-bound train of the evening departing in ten minutes," she recalls. "So, I did the unthinkable—I pulled my heels off my feet and ran for it, barefoot through city streets to catch my train. I made it with seconds to spare and collapsed into my seat holding my sore, soaked feet. It was then I decided that something had to be done."

Sandra, we feel you.

Her revolutionary dream of how to be fleet of feet while looking good has come to pass. Scarlett Chase luxury footwear is the result of hard lessons learned in high heels, relentless innovation, and, yes, believe it: fashion-forward style. This isn't your grandmother's Easy Spirits.



MARY DOWDLE PHOTOGRAPHY

business “the marriage of comfort to style”

Murphy collaborated with orthotic and orthopedic professionals, biomechanic specialists, and even industrial design experts to perfect truly comfortable heels, boots, loafers, and mules for women on the move.

But perhaps more importantly, Murphy pushed back and just said NO to haughty Italian manufacturers who couldn't wrap their minds around the marriage of comfort to style, and wanted to continue turning out practically unwearable works of art.

“I encountered a lot of resistance in Italy,” she explains. “They certainly know how to make gorgeous shoes and understand women's dress shoes. However, I wanted to build in a robust shoe infrastructure, which is simply foreign to them.”

Murphy arrived in Europe with data from her collaboration with orthopedic surgeons. She was armed with designs that demonstrated the pitch change between shoes without and with the insole built in, as well as heel placement, thickness, and an upper to accommodate more of the wearer's foot without taking away from the sleekness of the look.



PHOTOS BY MARY DOWDLE PHOTOGRAPHY

“But this entire notion was frowned upon,” she says. “We devised a true rebounding foam construction that looks gorgeous. But they were having none of it.”

But business is business, and eventually the craft masters relented. And that's how Scarlett Chase the brand was born. The women's suede and leather shoe line runs from size 5 to 12, and ranges in cost from \$395 for a pump to \$795 for knee-high boots. What makes the brand different—and, yes, wearable—is the footwear is specifically engineered for complete heel-to-toe walking.

“The Italian construction of Scarlett Chase shoes is impeccable, and the comfort provided by the patented insole is unmatched,” confirms Lisa Welch, a happy customer. “I traveled to Europe last fall and was on my feet from 6 a.m. to midnight three days in a row and didn't have to think about bringing other shoes for later in the day, by which point my feet would typically hurt.”

*left: Weston resident Sandra Powers Murphy founded the line two years ago after running barefoot in desperation throughout the streets of New York City to catch the last train back to Boston.*



### Shoe Polish

Murphy, through her persuasive business acumen, was able to push through her patented outsole and insole designs (patented in the E.U., U.K., and China, with U.S. patent pending), combined with elegant design at the highest level of the industry’s infrastructure. Today, Scarlett Chase is manufactured overseas in Italy and Portugal, while insole production occurs in Spain.

“Of course, Italy likes to make sleek, gorgeous footwear,” Murphy acknowledges. “But you’re basically slipping your foot into a piece of unsupported leather. Our solution was to put in a bulky, comfortable orthotic, but nobody knows it’s there inside a beautiful shoe.”

One of her collaborations was with Dr. Tom Michaud, author of *Injury-Free Running* (Second Edition, North Atlantic Books, 2021) and a renowned biomechanics and sports injury specialist. “Together, we figured out how to accommodate a woman in movement,” says Murphy. “He understands gait and walking, arch support, and different feet issues exacerbated by different types of footwear.”

Murphy knew her own uncomfortable experiences in heels were endemic of women’s fashion. “I hear friends say all the time, ‘I have the worst feet,’ and I realized that we’ve created a whole culture around thinking it’s our own fault,” she points out. “It’s a shame because women

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business “shoes that are gorgeous and all-day wearable”

do such amazing things in life—encompassing both family and the corporate world.”

At the core of the Scarlett Chase vision is the emotion and psychology behind fashion. “The thing that binds women together is no

matter what you’re doing, you want to feel confident and supported in your footwear,” Murphy emphasizes. “It’s that professional feeling of putting yourself out there and your best foot forward, whether it’s volunteer work, getting together with friends, being in an office, or traveling.”

Welch, who is both a busy professional and a marathoner, says, “I love that Sandra has made it her mission to create shoes that are gorgeous and all-day wearable. She’s proven that both these goals are possible!”

Possible indeed. Scarlett Chase boots and shoes come in a variety of hues, from chocolate brown to hot pink, camel, and taupe. If you’re a die-hard heel addict, don’t despair. The highest heel in the Scarlett Chase line is 75mm (3 inches) and the lowest is 55mm (2 inches). There’s an invisible platform under the forefoot for maximum comfort.

“By design, a two-inch heel feels like a one-inch heel, and a three-inch heel feels like a two-inch,” says the founder. “I also factored in common customer situations, such as wide feet, bunions, and plantar fasciitis. These conditions require the heel strike and dimensions be a certain way.”

Murphy and her husband have been Weston residents for two decades and have six children who have traveled through Weston’s schools. Their youngest is at Weston Middle School, and it is she for whom the footwear line is named.

“I want to be able to chase after my nephew, or go through airports, and be able to wear booties and boots and not be cringing,” Murphy emphasizes.

### Fancy Footwork

Murphy has obviously learned a lot about the world of footwear and orthotics, and offers another useful fact: “When people say, ‘I’m all set because I don’t wear high heels,’ they don’t realize that an orthotic arch support should be built into *any* shoe. Typically, there is zero support in flats and flip flops! Everyone should be thinking about arch and orthotic support in all footwear, from flats to sneakers to heels.”



MARY DOWDLE PHOTOGRAPHY

She also has an informed, insider’s opinion about “fast fashion,” in which clothing design imitates trends and quickly moves from idea to prototype, mass production, consumers, and, ultimately, the trash bin. “Cheap shoes have an etching inside that makes you think you’re getting a supported bottom,” Murphy reveals. “There might be a gel tossed in. But if you wear them for any length of time, those materials are sub-standard and they break down. Truly investing in quality footwear is so important. There needs to be real thought in the construction, which is why I patented what we’re doing.”

Right now, the best way to acquire Scarlett Chase footwear is directly from the company website. “We’ve been doing pop-up shops at retailers like Sara Campbell in Wellesley and Naples, Florida, and Revel in Winchester, Massachusetts,” says Murphy. “The best way to see where we’ll be next is to look at the ‘SC Live’ section of [Scarlettchase.com](http://Scarlettchase.com). And if you join our mailing list, you’ll automatically receive updates about our pop-ups.”


The Scarlett Chase brand is also equipped and ready to bring the party to you. “If you get a few friends together, we’ll come to your house or event and do a complimentary fit and style consult,” Murphy enthuses. “Email us at [Hello@scarlettchase.com](mailto:Hello@scarlettchase.com), schedule a time, and we can come to you.”

“I wish I had them in every color,” says Welch. “The lower heel actually feels like sneakers. And I forget I’m wearing a two-inch heel.”

Nationally, the fashion press is beginning to catch on. The footwear line has received coverage in *InStyle* and *Elle* magazines, and in another critical forum for success: online at TikTok.

“We put a lot of thoughtfulness around how women’s feet actually are, not how we wish they were,” Murphy concludes. “It’s truly been a labor of love.” [W W](#)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**  
Please visit [www.Scarlettchase.com](http://www.Scarlettchase.com)  
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