

WASHINGTONIAN

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Washington's Top Foundations + Women Who Love Shoes

“If I didn't wear heels, I would have to stand on a box next to Frank Herzog. And I like the look of the leg in a heel.”

—*Andrea Rueme*

Ave., Georgetown, 202-333-8962; adidas.com. Need a break from heels? Here you'll find stylish and comfortable sneakers that you can wear to more places than the gym. One of only eight Adidas concept stores in the United States, the shop carries women's designs that have been pulled from the company's archives and reintroduced with new colors and other updates. Many styles are exclusive to the store, and prices range from \$40 to about \$200.

Chanel. Tyson Galleria, 703-847-0555; chanel.com. At this boutique, which is devoted to accessories, you'll find ballet flats (starting at \$395 this season) along with stunner pumps, boots, evening shoes, and modern variations on Chanel's signature two-tone shoe. Things can get pricey, but it's all high-quality, and everything is a classic.

Comfort One Shoes. eight area locations; www.comfortshoes.com. Looking for a comfortable walking shoe? This local chain is the place to go. It has all the quality brands: Merlino, Merril, Ecco, Arche, Birkenstock, and more.

DSW. Arlington, 703-412-0818; Bethesda, 202-897-0360; Fairfax, 703-815-5425; Falls Church, 703-933-8522; Springfield, 703-924-5475; dswe.com. Searching for a bargain? This huge but well-organized store is filled with brand-name shoes at discounted prices. New styles arrive weekly.

Gucci. Fairfax Square, 8075 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, 703-506-6804; gucci.com. Gucci is famous for its leather goods, and that includes beautiful shoes. Styles range from sexy stilettos to classic pumps and moccasins with Gucci's signature horse-bit detail or its legendary "GG" logo fabric.

Kate Spade. 3061 M St., Georgetown, 202-333-8302; katespade.com. Kate Spade is known for handbags, but her shoes are also darling. Don't expect a lot of shoes, but go for quality over quantity. The shoes come in fresh colors and the styles range from cute daytime looks to festive evening

shoes, all with an element of timelessness—and a price tag that starts at \$225. For brides, there are wedding shoes.

Loehmann's. 5333 Wisconsin Ave., Chevy Chase, 202-362-4733; 7241 Arlington Blvd., Falls Church, 703-573-1510; 5230 Randolph Rd., Rockville, 301-770-0030; loehmanns.com. You might have to search a little, but Loehmann's is usually dependable for designer brands at bargain prices. Recently, the shoe department in Chevy Chase had Badgley Mischka boots, Michael Kors pumps, Ralph Lauren loafers.

Nobelman Martin. Tyson Galleria, 703-761-1600; Marza Gallerie, 202-966-9700; www.nobelman.com. One-stop shopping for beautiful, fashion-forward shoes—Prada, Manolo Blahnik, Christian Louboutin, Dior, Dolce & Gabbana, Ferris Pucci, and more. While there are plenty of high heels, there are also comfortable shoes such as Pumas. The salespeople are very helpful.

Nordstrom. Montgomery Mall, 301-365-4111; Fashion Centre at Pentagon City, 703-415-1121; Tysons Corner Center, 703-761-1121; Dulles Town Center, 571-434-4000; **Nordstrom Rack.** Dulles Town Crossing, 703-948-0100; 13760 Shady Grove Rd., Gaithersburg, 301-527-1133; Potomac Mills, 703-490-1440; nordstrom.com. Famous for its selection of shoes, Nordstrom has three shoe departments: Brass Plum, the teen-focused section, for cute shoes at reasonable prices; Women's Shoes, the most popular, for brands like BCBG, Nina, and Via Spiga; and Salon Shoes for more expensive designers such as Anne Klein and Cole Haan. Nordstrom offers a lot of options if you're looking for comfort in a shoe, with brands like Aerowalk and Taryn Rose. And Nordstrom Rack sells Nordstrom's excess stock—the store turns over shoes every month or two—at low prices.

Orish. 5454 Wisconsin Ave., Chevy Chase, 301-654-9899; and 3312 Cady's Alley, Georgetown, 202-333-6343. If you're looking for shoes you won't find anywhere else, visit this boutique. The store's collection includes designers such as Abu Mis, Dries van Noten, Sigerson Morrison, and Robert Clergerie. Expect to find price tags of about \$295 to \$495 for shoes and \$450 to \$750 for boots.

Saks Fifth Avenue. Tyson Galleria, 703-761-0700; and 5555 Wisconsin Ave., Chevy Chase, 301-657-9000; saksfifthavenue.com. Two words: Jimmy Choo. Saks Fifth Avenue is the only place in the area to find these precious shoes. If Choo is over your budget—they're usually more than \$400—take a look at Delman's pumps and flats. Women also come here for Ferragamo, Tod's, and Isaac Mizrahi. The sales associates are knowledgeable.

Saxxamoa. 1641 Wisconsin Ave., Georgetown, 202-471-4400; saxxamoa.com. This pretty little shop's collection is a must-see for any shoe lover. First Lady Laura Bush has stopped by. The friendly store stocks a range of styles, prices, and colors, but a few standouts are the Oscar de la Renta and Kiki Daniels heels, and the London Sole baller loafers. Mark your calendar for a trunk show October 8 from 6 to 9 PM—designer Bette Muller and her spring collection will be at the store along with local designer Queen Marlene, who makes pretty belts and shoe clips.

Shake Your Booty. 2439 18th St., NW, 202-518-8205. In the heart of DC's Adams Morgan, this boutique has hip, colorful shoes with affordable prices. You'll find fun flats along with higher heels.

The Striveter. 115 S. Royal St., Alexandria, 703-548-7105; thestriveter.com. Women flock to this adorable Old Town boutique for gorgeous shoes and friendly service. The staff knows customers by name and will help you find the right shoe, whether you're looking for a cute flat or feminine pump. Choose from Marc Jacobs, Lulu Guinness, Cynthia Rowley, and Emma Hope's, to name a few.

Stuart Weitzman. Tyson Galleria, 703-827-9999; stuartweitzman.com. Working women favor Stuart Weitzman for comfortable yet fashionable daytime shoes, but there are also evening styles. For wider feet, the shoes are available in a C width. Prices start at about \$198.

Wild Woman Wear Red. 1512 U St., NW, 202-387-5700; wildwomanwearred.com. This shop in DC's hip U Street area specializes in "funky, yet functional" footwear. Most things are under \$150. They also carry nice handbags—check out the crocheted clutches made by the owner, Toddler Munkler. After you shop, go next door for a hot-corn cupcake from Cake Love.

Zara. 1238 Wisconsin Ave., Georgetown, 202-944-9797; zara.com. This international chain is always reliable for runway-inspired styles at low prices. Shoes are on display throughout the store—there are simple pointed-toe pumps and trendier looks.

Zelaya Shoes. 4940 St. Elmo Ave., Bethesda, 301-656-8550; zelashoes.com. Whether you're looking for a Saks Suscoy, a \$600 Vera Wang, or something in between, Zelaya has it. The store is stocked with fun, stylish shoes, and the simple displays make it easy to see all the great stuff. Owner Tony Zelaya makes you feel welcome. It's inside the women's clothing boutique Daisy Too, so you can choose a hip outfit to go with your new shoes. **W**

Alisa Kilpatrick (aliskilpatrick@gmail.com) writes about shopping tips every September.



Channel 9's Andie MacDowell, who got her love of shoes from her mom, shops at the Saks in Chevy Chase.

Sassanowa, says, "If a shoe fits, women want to buy it in every color."

Then again, it doesn't have to fit. **During a sale on the Shoe Hive in Alexandria, a woman bought two pairs of shoes that were a whole size apart. "If there's a sale, they make them fit," owner Elizabeth Todd says.**

One boutique helps women sneak a new shoe purchase past their husbands by disguising a shoebox in a Whole Foods bag. The same boutique has also been asked to scratch up new shoe bottoms with an emery board so the shoes look worn and

the customer's husband will think she's had them forever.

Men and Heels

Some women don't worry about hiding shoes from the men in their lives—sometimes, the men are the ones doing the shopping. My husband has surprised me with Marc Jacobs shoes.

"Husbands come in and try to match a wife's personality to a shoe," Sassanowa's Sarah Cannova says.

One of the Shoe Hive's best customers is

Bob Brooks, a congressional chief of staff who buys shoes for all the women in his life—mother, sister, girlfriend, assistant. He's no shoe expert, but he passed by the store one day and thought they had nice things.

"The staff advises me on what to buy and ships it for me. I've gotten nothing but positive responses to the gifts," Brooks says. "For my mom in Arkansas, they're something she hasn't seen around."

Favorite Shoe Stores

Adidas Original Store, 1251 Wisconsin

“Love shoes—they always fit, while clothes might not.”

—Anna Loder

single outfit look great.” Laker often wears jeans with a T-shirt or cashmere sweater and uses shoes to vary the look—anything from a coral Delman pump to a \$10 pair of silver thong sandals.

Native Washingtonian Janet Ochsmann Sussman has loved shoes since she was a teenager. “The wrong shoes can ruin an outfit,” she says. Her treasured collection is kept in a luxurious mirrored walk-in closet and is organized by type of shoe—dressy at the top, down to casual at the bottom, with boots in a separate area. She knows the location of every shoe, whether it’s the Louis Vuitton boots she found in Barcelona or her green Versace evening sandals.

Sussman, who raises money for charity, uses shoes as a way to express her personality. As one friend says, “Shoes are just a part of Janet.”

Mary Malinin’s stylish shoes are often strewn all over a hallway—her daughters play dress-up in her closet and love trying on her shoes. Malinin, the political adviser and conversationalist, says that beautiful shoes add perfection to an outfit.

“They’re pretty critical: If your shoes work, the whole thing works,” she says.

Her favorite shoes lately are zebra-print pointed-toe pumps with 3½-inch heels. She says they’re comfortable and versatile—and they make almost any outfit look good.

When Malinin arrived in Washington during the Reagan administration, she got the impression that other women didn’t share her enthusiasm for shoes because of the notion that “thinking women did not have time for vanity.”

Over the years, she has noticed that perception fade—while working in the White House as both assistant to President George W. Bush and counselor to Vice President Dick Cheney, Malinin saw many women on the senior staff wearing nice shoes. She also thinks shoes are about more than just fashion.

“If you can’t get your shoes right, it says something about the entire package,” Malinin says.

A Real Life

Washington women, practical though they may be, love the same thing New York



Janet Ochsmann Sussman has loved shoes since she was a teenager. As a Washingtonian, shoes are just a part of Janet.

women do about shoes: a high heel.

“Not every shoe should be practical,” says *Washington Post* fashion editor Robin Givhan. “High-heel shoes can make you happy, they make you feel sexy. Most women don’t wear a strappy three-inch sandal for the entire day, but they can be good for a dinner.”

Channel 9 news anchor Andrea Rouse remembers as a child seeing her mother in high heels and thinking that they looked great. At barely five feet tall, her mother still almost always wears heels, and so does Andrea. “If I didn’t, I would have to stand on a box next to Frank Herzog,” says the five-foot, 3½-inch Rouse. “And I like the look of the leg in a heel.”

Earlier in her career, Rouse taught high school and wore heels because she wasn’t much taller than her students.

It’s not just the height-challenged who like a high heel. Kelly Doolan, a Catholic University graduate student, is five-foot-eleven and loves wearing four-inch heels.

“If you’re feeling terrible or gained five pounds, they literally pick you right up.”

“The wrong shoes can ruin an outfit.”

—Janet Ochsmann Sussman

But after breaking three heels on the brick sidewalks of Georgetown, Doolan added \$350 Chanel ballet flats to her wardrobe.

“They’re one of the best investments I’ve made,” she says.

Why We Buy

Marlene Aldaba, a sales associate at the Tysons Corner Nordstrom, says that many women shoe shop on emotion. A woman might already have 20 pairs of black shoes, but if she wants another black pump, Aldaba says, she might reason, “This one is different. It makes me feel special.”

And though clothing doesn’t always fit, shoes usually do. Sarah Cannova, co-owner of Georgetown’s chic shoe emporium,



Allison Lukers turned a shoe closet into a home for her 100 pairs—sorted by heel height, season, and color.

LOVE YOUR

SHOES

A Secret of Looking Good? Great Shoes. Here's Why Some Women Own Hundreds of Pairs, and Where to Find Everything From Cute Pumas to Sexy Pradas.

By Alycia Kilpatrick

Besides my husband, there's one other love in my life.

Shoes.

It started when I was eight and I began reading my mother's copies of *Vogue*. Sixteen years later, after I landed my first job in fashion in New York, a friend invited me to a Manolo Blahnik sample sale. I bought my first pair—turquoise and white polka dot open-toe mules with four-inch heels.

There was no turning back.

After eight years in New York, my husband's job brought us back to our hometown of Washington, and I found myself wondering: Where can I shop for shoes? Are there women in Washington who love shoes as much as I do?

I not only discovered some great stores, I realized that I'm not alone.

A look inside the glass-doored closets of Michaela Salahi's Virginia home reveals shelf upon shelf of shoes in practically every color—she owns close to 300 pairs. One closet is devoted to black shoes. While Salahi, a fashion model and fundraiser, loves designers like Prada and Gucci, she's not a shoe snob—she'll buy any shoe that looks cute, whether it's a \$445 Manolo Blahnik or a \$30 pair at Nordstrom Rack. Some-

times, the only reason she purchases a pair is because, with her busy life, she forgets what she owns.

"Some people are into jewelry; I accessorize with shoes," Salahi says. "They make me feel good."

To help her remember what shoes she has, Alison Lukes, who works for a DC television production company, converted her linen closet into a home for her 100 pairs. To easily see everything, she gets rid of shoeboxes and places her shoes on shelves, organizing them by season, heel height, and color.

Lukes, a former creative image manager for fashion designer Michael Kors, loves shoes because, she says, "they can make a

“Some people are into jewelry; I accessorize with shoes. They make me feel good.”

—Michaela Salahi

Photography by John Falls