

BASS VS. CHANDLER

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(1) In today's fashion conscious society, the word "Bass" does not conjure up images of fishing; instead, many consumers think first of the status rich Bass Shoe Company. One popular model is their deck shoe, appropriately named "Boater." This shoe is sold at Bass outlet stores or in upper-class stores such as Lord and Taylor. Chandler Shoes also manufactures its own version of the boat shoe which is quite similar to Bass in appearance, with some minor variations. The one significant difference between the two is the cost, with the Bass shoes priced markedly higher than the Chandler. For the economically alert shopper, the slight differences in appearance and comfort between these two shoes is not substantial enough to negate the significant difference in cost. In the light of these differences, Chandler shoes are a more economic buy than Bass shoes.

(2) Both Bass and Chandler have styled their shoes after the popular deck shoe. The genuine leather upper on both has a smooth finished quality on the outside, while the loose, brushed leather on the inside takes on the quality of sheared velour. Eight eyelets decorate the back rim of the shoe, and a leather shoelace runs in and out these holes. This lace is used ultimately to tie the shoe. White thread binds the two pieces of leather to each other, forming a semi-circle along the toeline. Both shoes have one-half inch, white, durable rubber soles, the flexible bottoms of which are corrugated to reduce slips.

(3) Each manufacturer, however, adds distinguishing marks to its shoes. Bass, for instance, makes blatant use of advertising on its shoes: a green nylon "Bass" label is sewn to the side of the right shoe, and the name is printed in raised letters both on the side of the sole and on the bottom of the sole. Chandler, on the other hand, discreetly stamps its name along the inside sole of the shoe. The top of the Bass shoe forms a squared, box-like shape; Chandler gently curves the toe area in a flowing arc. Both shoes are brownish, but the Bass shoe shades more toward maroon or mahogany while Chandler is dark chestnut in hue.

(4) Each shoe varies in durability and comfort as well. Brass eyelets, which do not rust when wet, are used on Bass shoes; Chandler eyelets are metal rings thinly coated with paint which invariably flakes off under normal wear and tear. This exposed metal frequently rusts, leaving a stain on the surrounding

leather. On the Bass shoe, the top stitching along the uppers is double-stitched, while Chandler stitching is of single thickness. This double stitching may prolong the life of the shoe by providing extra strength against the stresses of everyday use. Another minor advantage to the Bass shoe is that this manufacturer places a thin layer of cushioning material on the inside portion of the sole, with an extra layer at the instep for support of the arch. Although this does feel soft to the touch, the difference in comfort between Bass padded shoes and Chandler unpadded shoes is relatively small.

(5) The most significant dissimilarity between the two shoes is the cost. Bass shoes cost forty-five dollars, while Chandler charges twenty-nine dollars. Although Bass shoes may vary in price more than Chandler, (Bass shoes are distributed to various retailers and Chandler shoes are standardly priced for each of its stores), the wide price difference cannot be wholly accounted for in this manner. Clearly, the consumer is being charged for the privilege of wearing the Bass label.

(6) Although some may still choose the status symbol, Bass, to the money-conscious shopper, the obvious selection is Chandler shoes--substantially the same in appearance and comfort, considerably less in cost.