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## Cole Haan OriginalGrand Wingtip Review

by Solereview Editors | March 19, 2022



Tech Summary Pros Cons

Cole Haan's marketing pitch: Our proprietary Grand.ØS innovation for ultimate walkability.

Upper: Leather with synthetic suede and textile lining.

Midsole: Single-density EVA foam, plastic shank.

Outsole: EVA foam with heel and forefoot rubber pieces.

Insole/footbed: Removable insole with leather lining. It has a very thin forefoot, so inserting an orthotic will decrease upper space.

Country of origin: Vietnam.

Airport-friendly: No, the upper has metal eyelets.

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Color reviewed: Woodbury-Java.

Waterproof: No. For use in dry weather only. The leather is quick to absorb water.

Vegan: No, the upper uses genuine leather.

Weight: 306 gms/ 10.8 ounces for a half pair of Men's US 9/UK 8/EUR 42.5/CM 27

Widths available: D - regular (reviewed), wide.

The Cole Haan Originalgrand was purchased at full retail price for our review.

## INTRODUCTION



The Cole Haan Originalgrand's design is based on the 2011 Cole Haan Lunargrand; the latter was inspired by the Nike Lunaracer.

Most 'dress shoe hybrids' rely on a simple design recipe.

Which is, take a conventional dress shoe silhouette like a Wingtip Derby or Oxford, and attach it to a sneaker-like sole with the cushioning comfort to match.

While brands like Ecco [have been doing the leather + foam midsole concept for a long time](#), it took the Cole Haan's Lunargrand to nudge the leather footwear industry into a brand new direction.

The Cole Haan Originalgrand began its life as the Cole Haan Lunargrand a decade ago. It was named after Nike's then-premium cushioning material, the Lunarlon foam.

In 2011, Lunarlon foam was to Nike what [the ZoomX foam is to Nike today](#). Lunarlon was a [lightweight midsole foam](#) that was significantly lighter and responsive than



traditional EVA foams.

Curious minds may want to know – how the heck did Nike get involved in the design of a Cole Haan shoe?

Not many people know that Nike used to own the Cole Haan brand till 2012, so many running shoe technologies and parts flowed between the two brands. Those included the Nike Air, Cushlon, and Lunarlon cushioning platforms.



Notice the similarities between the ridged midsole of the Cole Haan Originalgrand and Nike Lunaracer. We rest our case.

When the Nike-led Cole Haan brand decided to glue a florescent green Lunarlon midsole to a leather Wingtip upper, it created the Cole Haan Lunargrand – a hybrid dress sneaker like none other. It was almost as if the midsole [from the vintage Lunaracer](#) was retrofitted on a dress Wingtip.

Such dress-hybrid shoes are commonplace today. But back in the day, the Cole Haan Lunargrand was truly avant-garde with no equals.

Cole Haan's separation from Nike also led to the divestiture of several footwear technologies. The present-day Cole Haan brand is founded on the strong legacy of Nike's design ethos, but its catalog no longer features Nike Air, Nike Cushlon, or Nike Lunarlon.

That is why the shoe here is called the Originalgrand instead of the Lunargrand. It's a nice enough dress sneaker with an accommodating fit and passable quality of materials.

Thus the name 'Originalgrand' is somewhat of an irony, because it's inspired by the Lunargrand and not original in its right.

Based on our ownership experience, we see traditional brands [like Clarks and Florsheim offer superior value for money](#), but Cole Haan products have a unique aesthetic that appeals to many.





Cole Haan’s choice of materials and construction has also seen better days. Its products aren’t what they used to be – an opinion that also holds for Johnston and Murphy.

Cole Haan used to be the only game in town, but we’re spoilt for choices today. We’ve listed alternatives to the Originalgrand towards the end of this review.

THE SOLE DESIGN AND RIDE COMFORT





Our size 10 pair weighed a mere 11.1-ounces or 314 grams.

The Cole Haan Originalgrand weighs less than 11-ounces for a sample size 9, and 11.1-ounces for our reviewed pair in size US 10.5. That's considered lightweight, even for a dress shoe hybrid.

Most of those weight savings happen due to the midsole design. A single-density EVA foam stack forms most of the midsole and outsole. Rubber exists on the outsole, but only under the heel and forefoot.



The outsole and midsole are the same. Almost.





Only the heel and forefoot have outsole rubber inserts.

The rest of the outsole is EVA foam. As with all EVA-foam outsoles, the grip is satisfactory on regular surfaces, but average on dusty and wet contact areas.

When Cole Haan's cushioning material switched from Nike Lunarlon to an EVA foam-blend (Grand.OS), that also led to a decrease in softness and responsiveness.





The current generation Originalgrand uses EVA foam instead of the Nitryl rubber-based Lunarlon, so the ride is firm and flat.

Sure, it's comfortable like any other dress shoe with an EVA foam midsole, but it's no longer the Lunargrand.



The removable insole has a contoured EVA frame to cup the foot.





The footbed is covered with leather for a smooth under-the-foot experience.

The insole is removable. It's not very soft, but it's comfortable and supportive due to the cupped design of the EVA frame.

The rearfoot has an EVA foam frame with a rounded bottom; this creates an excellent cupping action. The top is layered with smooth leather.



The insole uses single-density foam as its cushioning base. The forefoot is not padded.





Take note. The forefoot insole is not padded. This may pose a problem when replacing the stock insole with a thicker orthotic.

It's worth mentioning that the insole's forefoot has no cushioning whatsoever – it's just the leather footbed glued to a fabric base. However, the lasting or Strobel is a sheet of EVA foam. That adds some softness to the insole.

This information is useful for readers who intend to replace the insole with an aftermarket orthotic. Replacing the stock insole with a thicker orthotic will *reduce* interior space.



The shoddily-fixed EVA lasting under the insole looks cheaply put together.



Over the years, Cole Haan's quality has been on a steady decline. Their shoes are not bad, but better shoes can be had for the money. Cole Haan happens to be more stylish, that's all.

The EVA lasting under the insole is a good example. When compared to the clean lasting of [the Clarks Un Tailor Tie](#) and [Florsheim Midtown](#), the Originalgrand looks shoddily put together.

Though the insole is comfortable, it doesn't compare with the likes of [Clarks and Florsheim's Ortholite footbeds](#). There are evident signs of cost savings here.



The 'welt' is decorative, and is not stitched to the upper.

The 'welt' on the upper isn't a functional one like [what the Ecco ST1 Hybrid uses](#). These are decorative or faux strips that mimic the aesthetics of a welted sole; the leather upper is merely glued to the midsole.

From a ride perspective, the Originalgrand has a few things going for it. The firm midsole is very stable for an EVA base and has a smooth loading character.

There are no gaps on the outsole, so there is ample contact area to transition the weight through the gait cycle. The midfoot is stiff, so there's a plastic board in there somewhere. The forefoot is very flexible, since there's just an EVA midsole and leather upper involved.

Thus, walks and commutes are comfortable, more so than traditional dress shoes with a leather sole. And depending on the color of the midsole, the Originalgrand can either look like a dress shoe or a sneaker.



For example, the Woodbury-Java color seen here has a dressy character because of the dark midsole.

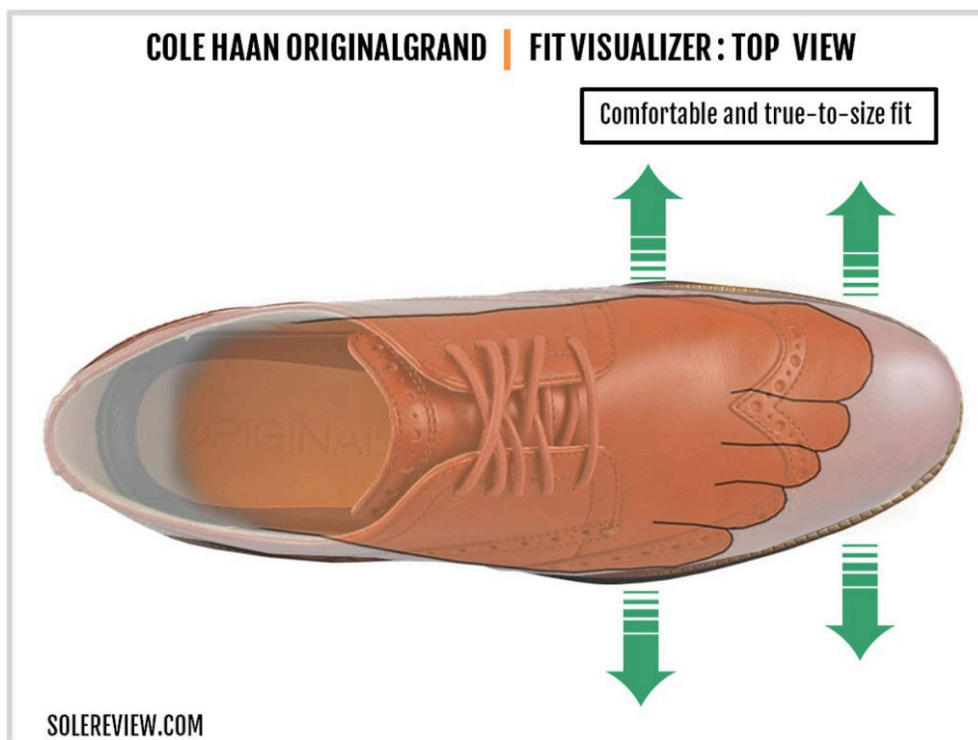
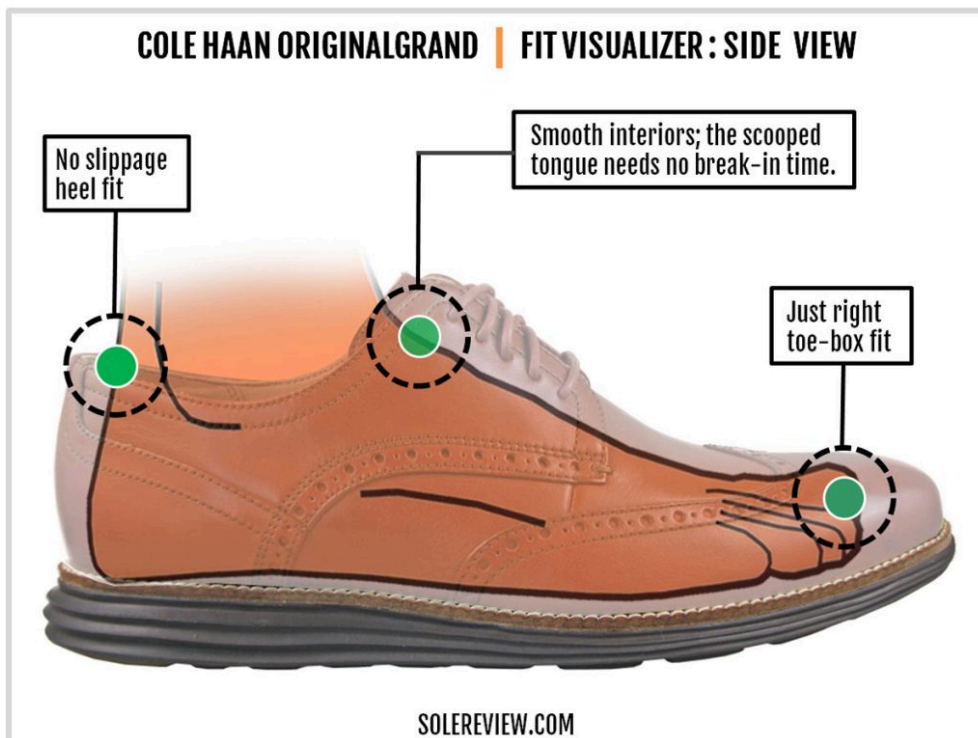
## THE UPPER DESIGN, MATERIALS, AND FIT



The lining uses a combination of textile and soft synthetic suede.

The Cole Haan Originalgrand has a comfortable fit. The upper fits true-to-size, and the interiors have a relaxed fit that will take most foot shapes.





The forefoot doesn't feel tight, and the insides feel smooth. Most of the lining inside the mid and forefoot is fabric, and that keeps the upper thin and supple.

For wider feet, there's an option of wide sizing as well.





The heel is backed with a stiff counter and lined with synthetic suede and textile.

Though the heel lacks a padded top-line, the suede lining and internal heel counter do a good job at preventing heel slippage.

The heel isn't stiff and does not require a break-in period.



The tongue edges are not folded, but the lining is soft and comfortable. The scooped flap prevents shoe bite.

The tongue edges aren't folded, and the flap isn't stitched and turned. Nonetheless, the tongue isn't stiff and doesn't bite the instep. The short and scooped flap design also makes the fit comfortable.

The flap lining is made of foam-backed soft synthetic suede, and that adds to the interior comfort.





The soft upper uses corrected grain leather.



A dress shoe with an external lacing panel is called a Derby, not an Oxford. Also pictured here are the waxed laces.

Like most shoes in this price segment, the Cole Haan Originalgrand uses corrected grain leather with a slightly burnished effect.

The silhouette is a Derby-style Wingtip with decorative brogue details. Contrary to the shoe's description on Cole Haan's website, this is *not an Oxford*.



This particular color goes better with dark denim rather than dress trousers. An all-black Originalgrand would be a dressier choice.



The Brogue details give the Originalgrand a dressy character, and so do the faux welts.



The hidden eyelets are backed with metal grommets.

The brogue detailing on the Wingtip, quarter, and tongue give the upper a dress shoe aesthetic. It helps that the dark midsole with the faux welts blends right in.

The waxed laces do a good job of staying tied. The hidden eyelets are mounted over metal grommets, and while that reinforces the lacing panel, the Originalgrand will set off a metal detector. These shoes will need to come off during the airport security check.



Signs of cost-cutting are visible on the upper too. The vamp has seams attaching it to the midfoot piece; even the heel panel is seamed together. There's a reason why whole-cut oxfords are the holy grail of dress shoes. The larger the pieces, the more expensive and complicated they are to produce.

In contrast, the Cole Haan Originalgrand employs low-cost construction techniques. Using smaller leather pieces are less expensive, as they interlock better during the nesting process and lead to better utilization of the leather hide.

That's a good thing from a productivity perspective, but the retail price should also reflect that. For example, [the lower-priced Florsheim Flair Wingtip has a similar design](#), but uses a single-piece vamp and quarter panel.

[The Clarks Untailor Tie is a great example](#) of achieving a balance between cost efficiency and premium construction. Its outer side has no seam at all; the vamp is a continuous and seamless piece from the toe to midfoot. The inner side has a seam, but that's hidden from plain sight. Even the heel back part is a single piece of leather.



The Originalgrand Wingtip isn't intended to be used as rainwear, so don't. The leather is quick to absorb moisture and produce wet stains.

The Originalgrand's leather is not waterproof at all, even for mild drizzles. As seen here, the raindrops will temporarily leave dark stains before drying back to the normal shade.



On the bright side, this indicates that the leather is minimally corrected on top. In other words, this is a hallmark of a semi-aniline leather.

It's *not meant to be* a waterproof shoe, so other rain-appropriate Cole Haan shoes are available as an option.

## PROS AND CONS



As a sum of its parts, the Cole Haan Originalgrand is a decent dress shoe hybrid with a comfortable ride and well-proportioned upper fit. The insides feel smooth, and the shoe needs no time to break-in.

Based on the quality of materials, this shoe should be around \$30 cheaper. But the \$160 retail price includes Cole Haan's upmarket image and style premium, and so there's that.

The lightweight EVA midsole is stable, and has the expected shortcomings of an EVA midsole. For example, the traction quality isn't as good as TPR or PU soles. This isn't specific to the Originalgrand, but it applies to all shoes with an EVA outsole.

That being said, there are no deal-breakers here. This is a stylish shoe with the level of comfort one expects of a sneaker-inspired dress shoe hybrid.

## SHOES THAT ARE SIMILAR TO THE COLE HAAN ORIGINALGRAND





The Originalgrand has a unique aesthetic, so a quick search within Cole Haan yields similar products.

The Zerogrand is another shoe from the Nike era – it borrows the ‘Nike Free’ design for its lightweight midsole.

And we say lightweight, it’s not hyperbole. The Zerogrand weighs less than 10-ounces, thanks to its articulated midsole and lightweight upper. Also, the leather is a lot thinner than what the Originalgrand uses.

Another comparable Cole Haan shoe is the Grand Ambition Wingtip. A Brogued Wingtip upper with laser-etched details is attached to a lightweight EVA foam midsole. The insole is non-removable though.

Rockport sells a couple of comparable products. The Total Motion Sports Wingtip undercuts the Originalgrand by \$20 but offers a similar set of features and benefits.

Its EVA foam midsole is tipped with rubber under the heel and forefoot, and inside the upper is a removable insole. The brogue Wingtip upper also has faux welts – just like the Cole Haan shoe. The Rockport Garrett Wingtip has a similar form factor as well.

A couple of products from Florsheim and Clarks also compare with Cole Haan. Those would be the Florsheim Flair Wingtip and Clarks Chantry Wing. Both are based on EVA midsoles with welt details, and are \$30 cheaper than the CH Originalgrand.



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