

The Wedge Story

You might be wondering why a medical doctor and trumpet player for 45 years devote over 10 years of his life to making a mouthpiece that actually IS different and better, and why should you care? Good question...

The Wedge was invented in a desperate attempt to avoid public humiliation as an advanced amateur playing principal trumpet in an orchestra performing West Side Story. I knew that no amount of practicing over the next few months was going to provide the range and endurance I would need at the end of a 2 hour pops concert. So, armed with my medical knowledge of human anatomy and physiology, articles about how dental structure influences range on a brass instrument, and unencumbered by much knowledge about how a bass mouthpiece SHOULD be made, I went to my workshop with a bunch of mouthpieces, some files and a Dremel tool, and ruined dozens of them while trying to make them better.

Finally, after weeks of experimentation and many more ruined mouthpieces I found a completely new and unexpected rim shape that provided better sound, comfort, flexibility, and responsiveness. It shifted my reliable range when fatigued from high C to an E without any sacrifice in sound. I needed a D.

It could have ended there. I certainly didn't need a new job. I was already a husband and father of two young girls, a physician and Department Head at a major teaching hospital, a medical researcher, an active member of my church, and a self defence instructor. My accountant said I should give up this foolish mouthpiece invention idea and practice medicine, so I changed accountants, acquired a patent, learned CAD design, learned how to operate a lathe and CNC mill, and set out to offer something truly different in the field of brass mouthpieces, while continuing to practice medicine.

I knew nothing about running a manufacturing and retail business, and physicians are generally terrible businessmen, so I decided to just build a business that treated people the way I would wanted to be treated. That was the start of the Wedge, and Harrison Mouthpieces, Inc.

The Wedge design has evolved through roughly 60 initial prototypes in the first year, and 2 major design advancements since the original concept. In 2019 we are still a small company of only 4 employees, now located in a rural setting on Gabriola Island, BC. This month we are on track to ship about 350 mouthpieces.

The motivation for taking this path was certainly not money. I stood to have much more of that had I taken my accountant's advice. I did it for the passion, and out of the absolute conviction, proven by the experience of thousands of players over the last 11 years, that for most brass players the Wedge mouthpiece really is "a better mouse trap".

From many years as an ER physician and martial artist I learned to divide the world into two kinds of people...those who have enough pain, and those who need more.

35 years as a trumpet player taught me that brass playing is hard enough. Most people do not need more of a challenge than it already presents. If there's a way to make brass playing less painful, I want to share it, not because of any need to be altruistic, but because it's just a blast to make that many brass players happy.

Should every brass player play a Wedge? No. Experience has proven that 10 to 15% of people play better on a conventional mouthpiece.

Should every brass player TRY a Wedge? Absolutely.

Why do I say that? Good question. I actually have very little to gain from any one individual buying and playing a Wedge mouthpiece. My accountant was right about that. But YOU could have a great deal to gain, and very little to lose, in trying one. And that is a good enough reason for me to be convinced that everyone should at least try one, and to provide free shipping and a 90 day money back guarantee that removes the risk of doing so.

You might be thinking you've heard this all before. Fair enough. There are lots of claims about how this or that mouthpiece is better than another, and in some cases, for some players, that is true. There are excellent mouthpieces made by companies like Bach, Schilke, Yamaha, Warburton, Pickett Brass, Austin Custom Brass, Harrelson, and others. The difference with the Wedge is that for the majority of players the Wedge actually provides a new, different, and better approach to brass mouthpiece design that produces better results. Secondly we are not afraid to show exactly how it does that, and then back it with a guarantee.

Want to learn more about what the Wedge can do, and how it works? Visit the "About the Wedge" page on the Wedge website for a full description of the benefits of the Wedge mouthpiece and exactly how the Wedge design provides them.