

# Love 2 Run

BY ALDEN MAHLER LEVINE

A sneaker is a sneaker, right? More or less like any other sneaker?

It turns out that's actually not the case – and neither is a sneaker store just like any other sneaker store. And one of 30Avenue's newest tenants, Scott and Amie Wiley, would like to show 30-A residents the difference. That's why they opened a local branch of their Dothan, AL technical shoe store, Love 2 Run, on March 25. "There's more to it than just going into your local big-box store and saying 'I want that shoe, I like that color, and I can deal with that price,'" Amie says.

The difference is the technology in the shoe. By "technology" we're not talking microchips – although at least one brand is working on sneakers that will offer feedback directly to your smartphone. Shoe technology has to do with the amounts and types of materials, like gel and foam, used in its construction that provide appropriate support and help prevent injury. Your ideal shoe will vary based on your body and how you are built to move, but also depends on what you're planning to do. A single person who runs, hikes, bikes, and plays tennis may need different support for each activity.

The truth of sneaker technology is one both Wileys feel deeply and personally. Scott has had 70% of the cartilage removed from one of his knees and Amie has chronic knee issues after shattering her kneecap in high school. Each has found a sneaker that has changed their lives. But it was Scott's experience in the Air Force Reserves that convinced him the truth needed to be shared. He realized that many of his colleagues were actually leaving the military because of difficulties with the running portion of their PT tests, or were suffering from aches, pains, or injuries that likely could have been avoided with better footwear.

So Scott turned to his wife, who owned and operated a boutique art and clothing store in Rosemary Beach. Together they opened the original Love 2 Run in Alabama. Then, driven by their fondness for 30-A and the lack of a technical running store in the area, Scott decided to take on a new branch full-time. Amie says there's a ready market in the area with lots of schools and hospitals, and where people are on their feet all day. "We're there for the person that stands on their feet all day in the surgery room, we're there for that

guy that just has to run so he can pass his PT test, and we've also got shoes for that 80-year-old lady that needs a good pair of shoes just so she can walk around with her grandkids at Disney World."

Love 2 Run offers several high-tech lines of sneakers. More importantly, it also offers the expertise to know which shoe belongs on which foot, provided by both expert staff and gait-measuring machines. You can also conveniently pick up all sorts of other relevant supplies, like waterproof visors, water bottles, and even

move en masse to Barbacoa Mexican Grill, which offers participants a free beer with the purchase of an entrée. Many of the form clinics offered by specific shoe lines also feature free beer and pizza.

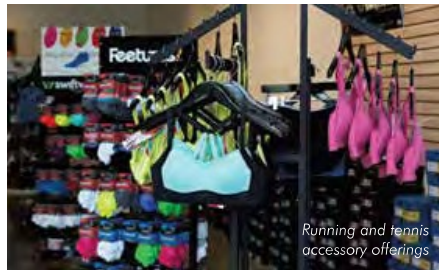
But the compelling force is the Wileys own commitment to community-building and to giving back. They give and sponsor race teams for a local Wounded Warriors project supporting vets in Georgia, Florida, and Alabama; and hope to expand those efforts in 30-A. They also want to develop relationships with podiatrists



30Avenue location



Owner Scott Wiley running diagnostics



Running and tennis accessory offerings



Athletic apparel



orthotic flip-flops -- perfect for the 30-A beachcomber with knee pain.

It's a store, yes, but the Wileys both embrace a bigger mission of community-building and a belief that runners' endorphins and tight-knit communities should be available to everyone. The store sponsors a weekly group run, deliberately marketed to runners and walkers of all abilities. "We just want everybody to get up and get going," Amie says. "And at 30Avenue we've got the Emerald Coast, the most gorgeous beaches in the world. Who wouldn't want to get up and get moving out there?" And after the exercise, the community's group runners

and other doctors to help make sure clients with specific foot issues, and even diabetes, get the specialized help they need.

"It's so much more than just being a retail store," Amie says. "We've been fortunate enough to get to hear peoples' stories and see their lives passing before us. It's such an honor to be part of their story."

**For more information on Love to Run at 30Avenue, call (850) 909-0402 or visit their Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/Love2run30avenue](http://www.facebook.com/Love2run30avenue).**