WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT LEATHER …

It can be most pleasant, to live, relax, and WORK with leather. More and more people are realizing this and take leather-upholstered furniture into their four walls, for private and professional purposes. As they know very well: leather offers ease and cosiness, elegance, beauty, naturalness, warmth and unique ambience. When speaking about genuineness and originality, there are unmistakable characteristics about leather. Leather – the gentle product from robust mother nature – demonstrates these traces as uniquely distinctive characteristics of authenticity: inimitable, precious and naturally lovely. Characteristics that speak for themselves: gentle, smooth, cuddly, warm, elastic, protective, supple and lovely – but also tough and durable, temperature-compensating and breathable.

Leather is a natural product and has an inimitable, living character. This stands without question, since all the experiences in the life of bovine animals are reflected in their skin. Slight colour and structure deviations in the individual sections of the skin are naturally-caused signs of live and do not diminish the value and the durability of leather.

TYPES OF LEATHER

The individual types of leather can principally be produced from any animal skin. The type of leather resulting depends primarily on the specified production process.

Nubuck has a soft, open surface and is silky as well as lightly honed. It can variously appear bright and dark when, for example, a human hand strokes it.

Aniline leather is impressive owing to its soft, skin-like surface with transparent protective layer. At the same time, it has a pleasant feel. Every pore is visible and palpable. This highly premium leather is noble with the appearance of a satin finish. It is washable. Semi-aniline lies between aniline and napa leather, which unites the benefits of both leather types.

Napa leather is especially known for its smooth feel. Its surface is finished, which means that the pores are closed. Structures in this leather are often imitated by embossing. Advantageous: this leather is particularly repellent to moisture and soiling.

Velour is also known as "suede". It is effective due to its long-fibre surface with a soft touch.

Full leather is unsplit thick leather with the leather layer on the upper leather and the leather layer on the flesh side.

SITAG-LEDER 'SELECT' – AN EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCE.

The leather we use is a soft, fine-grained nappa leather dyed through in the barrel and tanned with mineral salt. The surface is natural and finished. The leather is pre-dyed in the barrel and then adjusted to the final colour tone in the printing process.

CARE OF LEATHER

The purpose of the proper care of leather is to maintain as long as possible the favourable characteristics of the leather.

Cleaning: Wipe off dry soiling with weak, hand-warm neutral soapy solution (1 teaspoon in 5 litres of water). Use distilled water if possible, since it contains no chlorine or hardness (calcium carbonate). Avoid allowing the leather to soak through. Wipe off with clear, distilled water and dry with a soft cloth. Immediately use a dry cloth or blotting paper to soak up liquid, but do not rub. Clean off food and grease the same as dry soiling. Any residual grease will soak into the leather with time. After cleaning, treat the leather with special leather-care agents. First try out these agents on non-visible parts of the furniture.

Now and then, use the upholstery brush of the vacuum cleaner to clean nubuck leather. Fresh up heavily used and greasy places with a soft brush, a foam sponge or a rubber cleaning appliance.

Do not use grease or wax here, since they glue the surface. Never use shoe polish, turpentine, spot remover, benzine, floor wax or solvents. These products are not suitable for furniture leather.

Avoid exposing leather furniture to the sun or strong lamps, or placing them near radiators.

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THE MOST IMPORTANT HIGH-TECH PRODUCTION STATIONS:

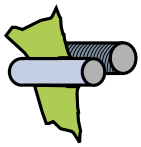
The production of leather is a complex technological process that is conducted in various steps.

STORAGE AND SORTING

The fresh or preserved raw materials must be stored in cooled rooms. Before processing, the quality must be checked and the various grades sorted.

SOAKING

Soaking removes soiling and salts from the untreated leather.



FLESHING

In this step of work, sharp bladed rollers remove animal tissue, flesh, and fat residue.

UNHAIRING

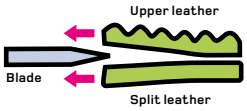
Adding lime and sulphur compounds removes the hair from the hides.

MORDANTING, PICKLING, AND TANNING

The mordanting and pickling steps prepare the hides with acidic and salt substances for the tanning process. During the tanning process, the skin fibres absorb the tanning materials and combine with them. The hides have now become leather.

DEWATERING

Rollers press the water out of the leather.



SPLITTING

To obtain a uniformly thick shagreen leather with a particular thickness, it is necessary to split the leather. The leather is horizontally split by guiding it against a mechanically rotating leather. This process is comparable to work with a circular saw.

UPPER LEATHER

The scarred side of the leather is processed to create the required thickness: which makes is suitable for use by saddlers, upholsterers and handbag and wallet makers. With thicker leather, all layers of the leather are still intact. This kind of leather was used during historical periods, for example, for armour protection. Today, upper leather is used for premium-quality clothing and furniture.

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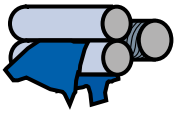
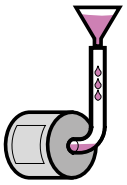
SPLIT LEATHER

The flesh side has less tear strength and is processed for velour, suede and for heavily finished, simple types of leather.



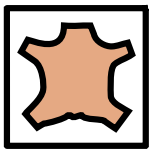
FOLDING

The shagreen is rendered to uniform thickness, and irregularities on the reverse side are removed. The next step is sorted for the individual dying lots.



NEUTRALIZATION, FILLING, DYEING, AND FATTENING

The acidic residue resulting from tanning is now neutralized. According to leather type, filling and dyeing now follow. The addition of fat provides the softness required for the final leather product.



DRYING

Two methods are used to dry the leather: vacuum drying (in which a vacuum removes the moisture) and hand drying (in which the leather is passed through drying ovens).

SOFTENING

To render the leather soft and pliable after drying, it is mechanically softened and prepared for finishing in the following steps.

FINISHING

After tanning, the leather is not yet ready for use. A number of process steps are now necessary, depending on the leather type and purpose for use. All work performed on the leather after tanning are called finishing steps.

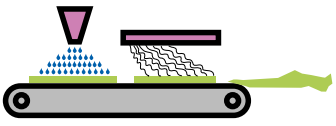
Finishing has the following purposes.

A. Protection of the leather against chemical and mechanical effects.

B. Uniform colour and gloss over the entire surface

C. Provision of special optical and haptic characteristics

D. Enhancement of the value of the leather



The final finishing steps provide the leather with its final appearance. These steps include priming, dye application, final finish, pressing, and ironing. These steps endow the leather with a glossy or matte, single- or multi-colour, smooth or scarred surface – depending on the fashion requirements.

The art of this finishing consists of applying the leather with filmy layers, without impairing the optical and desired natural characteristics, such as pliability and breathability.

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