

## Glossary A-L

**ANILINE DYE:** A transparent, water-based dye, originally produced from the indigo plant, that is used to color leather. The leather is dyed all the way through in an immersion process, so that the natural characteristics of the leather are visible.

**ANTIQUÉ LEATHER:** A two-toned leather, often with a high sheen, made with all the benefits of modern-day technology but designed to look aged.

**BLUE or WET-BLUE:** Leather hides with the hair removed that have been tanned (preserved) but not yet finished. Chromium salts used in the tanning process cause the hides to turn light blue in color. Also referred to as raw material.

**BUFFED LEATHER:** Leather from which the top surface of the grain has been removed by an abrasive cylinder. Also referred to as brushed, nubuck or sueded leather.

**CALF:** The hide of a young or immature bovine animal not exceeding 34 square feet in area and 1.00 millimeters in thickness.

**CHROME-FREE** ("White" Tannage): A technology introduced in the 21st century, used to replace chrome, which is not biodegradable, with an alternate tannage. Usually employing a mineral called gluteraldehyde, chrome-free leather will biodegrade in an environmentally-friendly way at the end of its useful life.

**CHROME TANNAGE:** The process of preserving leather by immersing it in chromium salts, converting the raw hide into leather. The resulting hides are soft and extremely receptive to excellent color variety.

**COMBINATION TANNING:** The process of first chrome-tanning leather and then further tanning it with vegetable agents, resulting in leather that is firm, yet supple. Sometimes referred to as retanning.

**CORRECTED LEATHER:** Leather whose surface has been partially removed by buffing and upon which a new surface has been built by various finishes and embossments. This process should remove only the top of the hair follicles. Also referred to as top grain.

**CRUST:** Leather that has been tanned and dyed, but not finished.

**DRUM:** A revolving cylindrical vat which can hold up to 10,000 s.f. of leather, used for processes such as washing, tanning, aniline-dyeing and milling leather hides.

**EMBOSSÉD LEATHER:** Leather embossed with a raised pattern either imitating or resembling the grain pattern of some animal or with a decorative design.

**FINISHING:** The final methods and processes of preparing leather for use, occurring after the tanning process, which makes the leather serviceable and aesthetically pleasing. It includes applying color, sheen and protective agents to the leather.

**FULL GRAIN:** Leather bearing the original skin surface, from which nothing except hair has been removed by buffing. The naked eye can see the peaks and valleys of the natural surface of the skin.

**GRAIN:** The outer side of a hide, which includes the pores, follicles and other natural characteristics, after the hair has been removed.

**HAND:** The term that describes leather's softness and feel.

**HAND ANTIQUÉD:** The process whereby skilled craftspeople hand-rub a contrasting color onto the surface of the leather to accentuate the natural grain or embossing.

## Glossary M-Z

**MILLING:** The process by which tanned hides are tumbled in rotating drums using a combination of heat and a misting of water to soften the hand or enhance the grain.

**NAKED LEATHER:** Leather that has been aniline-dyed in the drum and then topcoated with aniline dyes devoid of oil-based pigments. Naked leathers are pure and transparent but are less well-protected against staining and fading than semi-aniline leathers.

**NATURAL GRAIN:** Leather whose grain has not been altered in any way, such as by buffing, applying pigments or embossing, revealing the natural appearance of the grain.

**NUBUCK:** Full-grain, aniline-dyed leather that is buffed to create a soft and velvety nap.

**PATINA:** A surface luster that develops on pure anilines and nubucks, which grows more beautiful with use and the passing of time.

**PIGMENT:** An oil based coloration applied superficially to the surface of leather. Opaque and insoluble in water, it provides color and uniformity, as well as extra protection to the surface of the leather.

**PLATING:** The process of producing a smooth grain surface on leather by pressing it under a pressurized, heated metal plate.

**PURE ANILINE:** Leather which receives its only color from aniline dyes and exhibits natural markings and characteristics.

**SEMI-ANILINE:** Leather which has been aniline dyed, incorporating a small quantity of pigment in the topcoat, not so much as to conceal the natural characteristics of the hide, but affording additional protection.

**SPLITTING:** The process of dividing a hide horizontally into layers. A cowhide typically can be split into three usable layers, the top layer known as the skin or grain surface, and the center and bottom splits known as suede.

**SUEDE:** The horizontal split of a leather hide, usually with a velvet-like nap. Typically, suede hides average 18 square feet.

**TANNING:** The process of stabilizing perishable raw hides by the use of tanning materials into the permanent form of leather. This is known as the preservation process.

**TIPPING:** The process of applying a contrasting color to the raised area of an embossed hide, usually applied with a roller.

**VEGETABLE TANNING:** The conversion of raw hides into leather by soaking in tannins extracted from trees and plants mixed with water. The result is leather that has greater body and firmness than chromium-tanned leather.