

HELVETIA

Terminology

Aniline Finish: The most natural of finishes, colored mainly through the dyeing process, and light if any, extra finish is applied. This leather has a soft natural and luxurious feel. It is recommended for formal, light soiling areas only.

Aniline Dyed: The type of finish used to give the initial color to a skin. Aniline dyeing is the process of putting skins into a drum and allowing the dye to soak completely through.

Antiqued: Leather that is finished with one color over another (usually darker over lighter) so as to create rich highlights and an artificial aged appearance.

Buffed Leather: Leather from which the top surface has been removed by abrasion. Often known as suede or nubuck.

Buffing: Process used to minimize surface imperfections, creates a more uniform skin appearance.

Chrome Tanning: A method of tanning that uses chromium sulphate and other salts of chromium. It is more supple and pliable than vegetable tanned leather and allows more esoteric colors.

Corrected Grain: Leather that has been buffed to remove blemishes, then covered with a new, artificial grain created using pigments and other finishes.

Crocking: Removing the crock, or excess coloring, that rubs off of a newly-dyed hide.

Crust: Leather which has been tanned (treated to become nonperishable) or dyed but not otherwise finished.

Distressed: Another term for antiqued leather.

Drum Dying: The process of coloring leather by tumbling it in a rotating drum immersed in dye. A very effective method allowing maximum dye penetration.

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Embossed Leather: Leather that has been "stamped" with a pattern applied by extreme pressure in a press to give a unique design or imitation of full grain characteristics. Sometimes leathers are embossed to make them appear to be another leather, such as embossing an alligator pattern into cowhide.

Fat-Liquoring: The process of replacing oils that have been leached from the hide during processing.

Fat Wrinkles: Wrinkles in the grain of leather caused by fat deposits in the animal that creates beauty in the leather. Fat wrinkles are not visible in imitation grain leather.

Finish: Any enhancing effect applied to leather after it has been tanned. Examples are dyeing, embossing, buffing, antiquing, waxing, waterproofing, and so on.

Full Aniline: Leather receiving its color from dyes, however may receive a topical stain, wax, and/or water repellent.

Full Grain Leather: This is leather in its most natural form with its surface left untouched by sanding or buffing. However, full grain leather can be embossed or dyed without damaging the natural fibers. As only around 15% of all hides are suitable for use as full grain leather, this type is expensive and is used only for the highest quality leather finishes.

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Glazed Leather: Aniline-dyed leather which has been polished to a high luster by passing through glass or steel rollers under great pressure.

Glove Leather: Lambskin or other very soft leather typically used for gloves.

Grain: A word used to describe the natural characteristics of an unprocessed hide, such as its pores, wrinkles, markings, and texture.

Hand: A word used to describe the feel (i.e. softness or fullness) of leather, typically upholstery leather.

Hand Antiqued: Also known as "hand rubbing". The process of skilled craftsmen hand rubbing a contrasting color onto the surface of the leather to accentuate the natural grain and embossing.

Imitation: A variety of materials which have been made to resemble genuine leather. The great bulk of these are rubber or plastic-coated fabrics. It is unlawful to use terms connoting leather to describe imitations of the original hide.

Leather: A hide, or skin, that has been tanned into a non-perishable state.

Liming: The process of removing hair from a raw hide through the use of chemicals.

Milling: Process in 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: A leather with no surface, impregnated treatment or finish other than dye matter which might mask or alter the natural state of the leather. Usually reserved for the finest quality skins.

Nap: Describes the soft, "fuzzy" effect achieved in leather by buffing or brushing.

Natural Grain: A leather that displays its original grain.

Nubuck: A leather whose surface has been buffed and brushed to create a soft, velvety effect. Differs from suede in that while suede is created from the flesh (inner) side of a hide, nubuck is created using the grain (outer) side, giving it added strength and durability.

Oil Finish: Leather whose surface has been applied with oil to create a soft pliable finish.

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Patent Leather: Leather with a glossy impermeable finish produced by successive coats of drying oils, varnish, or synthetic resins.

Patina: The aura or luster that develops in a quality piece of leather with age.

Perforated: Leather in which a pattern of small holes is stamped using a die.

Pigmented Leather: Leather that has been roller or spray coated with a flat surface color on top of or instead of the usual dye finish. Leather is usually pigmented to add durability and hide natural blemishes.

Plating: The process of pressing leather under a heated plate. Often used in upholstery leather to mask imperfections.

Pull-up: Describes the behavior of leather that has been treated with oils, waxes, and dyes in such a way that when the leather is pulled or stretched (i.e. on upholstery), the finish becomes lighter in the stretched areas. Considered a mark of high quality.

Pure Aniline: Leather which receives all its color from dyes only and exhibits natural markings and characteristics.

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Saddle Leather: Vegetable-tanned cattle hide leather for harnesses and saddles, usually of a natural tan shade and rather flexible.

Sauvage: A coloring effect created by blending two similar dyes to create a mottled or marbled appearance.

Semi-Aniline: Aniline leather to which a matching pigment layer is added to even out the color and add protection.

Shrunken Grain: A full, natural-grain leather which is shrunken to enlarge and enhance the grain of the leather.

Side Leather: Leather made from one half, or "side", of a full hide. Typically refers to leather whose top grain (outermost layer) has been left intact.

Split Leather: Leather made from the lower (inner or flesh side) layers of a hide that have been split away from the upper, or grain, layers. Split leather is more fragile than side leather or full-grain leather, and is typically used in the form of suede.

Suede: Split leather that has been buffed and brushed to create a fuzzy surface feel.

Synthetic Tanning (Chrome-free) : Tanning using aromatic polymers. This leather is white in color and was invented as an alternative to chrome and vegetable tanning. This type of leather is considered chrome-free.

Tanning: Process of converting a raw hide into a stable, non-perishable state.

Top Coat: Synthetic transparent resins applied as a protective coating producing either a high gloss or a matte finish.

Top Grain: Leather whose top (outermost) layers have been left intact, in contrast to split leather.

Two-tone: An effect created by applying layers of similar or contrasting dyes to a piece of leather in order to create a mottled or aged appearance. Antiqued and Sauvaged leathers are examples of two-tone leathers.

Upholstery Leather: Leather created from a whole hide and intended for use in furniture, automobiles, airplanes, and other upholstery applications.

Vegetable Tanning: A method of hide tanning which utilizes materials from organic materials such as bark instead of the traditional chemicals. Vegetable tanned leather has greater body and firmness than traditionally-tanned leather.

Wax Finish: Leather whose surface has been applied with wax to create a soft pliable finish.

Weight: A term which describes the heaviness or thickness of leather. Typically given in ounces per square foot or millimeters (thickness).

Whole Hide: Leather created using a full hide, as opposed to a side, and typically intended for use as upholstery leather.

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