

LEATHERCRAFT
by OHD

FOR THE LOVE OF
LEATHER



Indulgence.



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Leather

Know Your Sources

WHAT IS LEATHER?

Leather is a strong, flexible and durable material obtained from the tanning, or treatment, of animal skins and hides to prevent decay. The most common leathers come from cattle, sheep, goats, equine animals, buffalo, pigs and hogs.

HOW IS LEATHER SOURCED?

Leather is made from the hides of animals, treated and finished to create a durable product suitable for a huge range of uses.

The main sources of animal hides globally are: 69% Cattle, 13% Sheep, 11% Goat, 6% Pig

These animals are not raised to make leather. Their hides are a *by-product* of being raised for food and, transforming them into leather ensures that a valuable resource does not contribute to the waste and environmental impact of landfill.

IS LEATHER SUSTAINABLE?

Leather is one of the most sustainable materials on the market. Leather is a highly versatile, widely used material. Responsibly made, it is highly regulated and certified with strong environmental credentials. Leather is a by-product of the food industry that saves *millions of tons* of waste from landfill every year.

- Leather keeps nearly 10 million tons of waste out of landfills each year
- Leather is long-lasting
- Leather products are repairable
- Leather can be recycled
- At its end-of-life phase, leather degrades through chemical and biological means
- The leather industry creates employment and skills for millions worldwide, an important defining factor in sustainability and the circular economy.

Leather Terms To Know

ANILINE DYED

The process of coloring leathers throughout with transparent dyes.

ANTIQUED

The light application of one color over another (usually darker than the base color), to create highlights.

CORIUM

The thickest layer of a leather hide. The fibers in this layer of the hide tend to be looser, which is why suede has a longer nap than nubuck, which is abraded from a top grain layer.

CORRECTED GRAIN

Leather whose natural surface texture has been altered.

DRUM-DYED

A dying process in which leather is immersed in dye and tumbled in a rotating drum, allowing maximum dye penetration.

DYEING

The application of color, either by spraying, hand-rubbing or immersion.

FINISHING

Any post-tanning treatment, such as: dyeing, rolling, pressing, spraying, lacquering, antiquing, waxing, buffing, embossing, glazing, waterproofing or flameproofing.

FULL GRAIN

Leather that possesses its original, natural grain; Leather which has not been altered.

GRAIN

The distinctive pore and wrinkle pattern of a hide; May either be natural or embossed.

HAND

A term used to describe the softness or feel of a leather.

HIDES

Skin of large animals, usually cattle; Used as another word for Leather

HOT STUFFING

A process that infuses dyes, waxes and oils into the surface of the leather under heat and pressure.

Leather Terms To Know

PATINA

A lustre that develops with time and use of the leather.

PIGMENTED LEATHER

An additional color (pigment) and protective topcoat applied. Some natural softness is sacrificed in this process.

PREMIUM SELECT

A term describing hides with minimal amount of scars or blemishes, usually less than 5% of all hides.

PURE ANILINE

Buttery, glove-soft leathers which are tumbled for up to 12 hours in drums containing transparent dyes.

RUGGED LEATHER

Scratches, blemishes, abrasions and scars will be visible in most areas and will range from light to dark in color.

SANDING (BUFFING)

Refers to the removal of grain, scars and blemishes from the hide.

SPLITS

Underlying layers of leather, usually used for Suedes.

SPLITTING

Cutting a hide into two or more layers.

TANNING

Treating raw hides to reduce perishability.

TOP GRAIN

Indicates that the leather surface has been corrected.

TUMBLING

A process in which hides are tumbled in a rotating drum to soften the hand or enhance the grain.

VACUUM SEAL

A process that infuses dyes, waxes and oils into the surface of the leather by placing them together in a vacuum sealed environment.

Leather Structure

ITS ALL IN THE LAYERS

The main layers of the cow skin used for leather can be divided into two main categories, the *corium* and the *grain*. The bottom layer, or corium, has thinner fibers which are more flexible and less tightly packed, and this is the layer that becomes thicker as the cow gets older. As we move towards the surface of the skin, the grain, the fibers become thicker and much more tightly packed adding great strength to the leather. The very top surface of the grain leather is often prone to bites, blemishes or other natural markings, and as a result, this layer is often sanded and buffed to give it a smoother appearance.



*Leather grain structure represented by natural hair fibers. This is not an actual image of leather structure

Leather Grades



FULL GRAIN

This is the highest quality leather, made from the top layer of the animal hide. It retains its natural grain pattern and has not been sanded or corrected. Full grain leather is known for its durability, breathability, and beautiful patina that develops over time.

TOP GRAIN

This is the second-highest quality leather, made from the layer below full grain leather. The surface is sanded and finished to remove imperfections, resulting in a more uniform appearance. Top grain leather is more pliable and less durable than full grain leather, but it still offers a high level of quality.

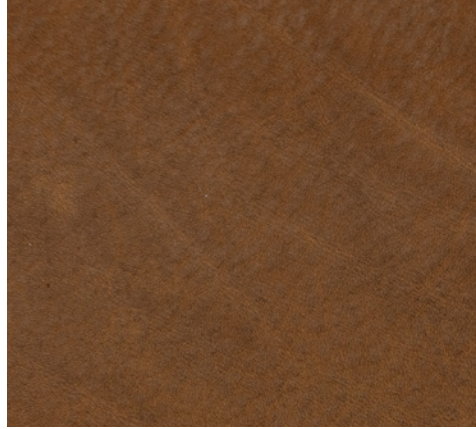
GENUINE LEATHER

This grade includes leather made from the lower layers of the hide, which have been split from the top layers. Genuine leather may be sanded, embossed, or finished to improve its appearance. It is less durable and breathable than full grain or top grain leather.

BONDED LEATHER

The lowest grade of leather, bonded leather is made from leather scraps and fibers that have been bonded together using adhesives and then finished to resemble genuine leather. It is less durable, breathable, and often lacks the natural characteristics of higher-grade leathers.

Leather Types



ANILINE

Also called "Pure Aniline" or "Naked Aniline". Color is added to these hides, much like a stain added to wood. The natural markings of the leather show through the color. Aniline is the most honest expression of leather you can buy. Aniline leathers get better with age, absorbing minor scratches and nicks gracefully as a beautiful Patina.



SEMI-ANILINE

Semi-Aniline leather sits right in-between Aniline and Protected leathers. Also called "Aniline Plus", this leather has been dyed, then coated with matching pigments to even out the color. This finish does not mask the natural characteristics of the hide.



PROTECTED

Protected leathers are dyed in a process similar to painting. Some of the natural characteristics of leather, such as scars etc. will be covered by this process. This process insures a consistent color range throughout the hide. A clear top coat that repels spills and stains is added. This gives it a high resistance to fading, liquids, scratches, and stains.



NUBUCK

After Aniline dyeing, these top grain leathers move on to a finishing process of gentle buffing and polishing that removes the top cell layer. The effect is a whisper-soft nap and a "powder-like" appearance. Buffing obscures the hide's color variations and natural markings.



SUEDE

Suede is made by splitting a hide and sanding the inner surface of the split leather. The result is velvet-like, napped finish with loosened leather fibers. Suede is often thinner than Nubuck and more cost effective as it typically is sourced from inferior parts of the hide.

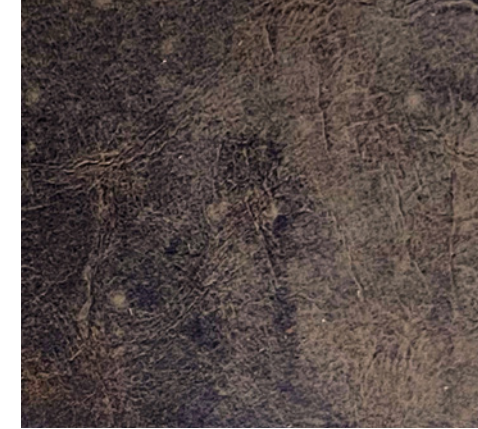


Specialty Leather



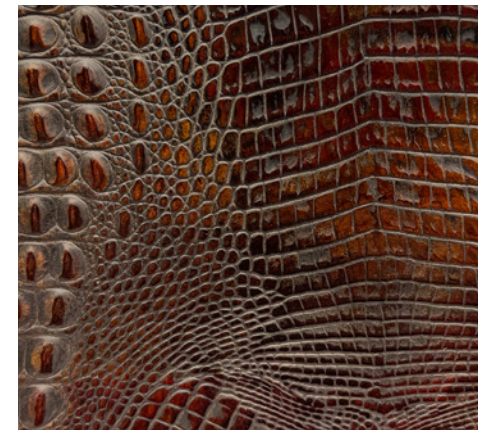
HAIR-ON HIDE

Hair on leather is exactly what it sounds like, leather that has hair on it. Specifically it is leather that retains the original hair on it, providing a natural looking accent to your home. Much like a premium quality leather, hair-on hides have a natural beauty that offers individuality in every piece.



BUFFED

Buffed, or Sanded, leathers are hides that have been sanded or worn. On occasion, they may be resealed with a protective top coat though this is not always the case. This sanded finish creates a distinctive patina that is unique to every piece.



EMBOSSED

Embossing leather is a step in the finishing process where the cow hide is stamped or rolled under great pressure to create a pattern or design in the hide. The variety of patterns is tremendous, with motifs including alligator, crocodile, ostrich, flowers, and various geometrics to name just a few.



HAND-RUBBED

Hand Rubbed leather is a type of semi aniline that is finished by rubbing layers of aniline dyes onto, or off of, full grain leather until the desired color is achieved. This process is done after the pieces have been upholstered, providing a unique rub pattern for every frame.



Naturally Occurring Features



FAT WRINKLES

Fat wrinkles are very desirable in pure aniline leathers and add natural beauty to each piece.



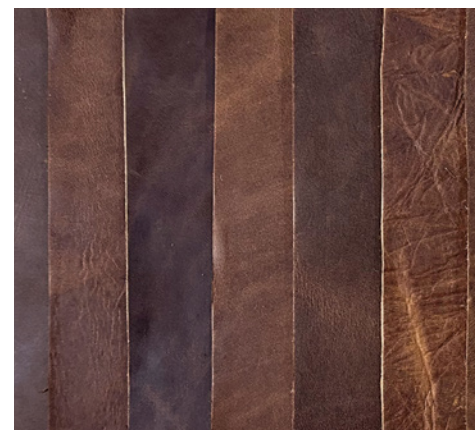
INSECT BITES

Small insect bites that are "healed" are acceptable but "open" insect bites are not acceptable.



HEALED SCARS

Healed Scars can add a wealth of character to your furniture. When choosing leathers that are protected or sanded, fewer scars will be visible.



COLOR VARIATION

Since pure aniline leathers are dyed and not pigment top-coated, subtle color variations should be expected. Color variations are expected from dye-lot to dye-lot and, in some cases, on the same hide.

*Pictured above are swatch cuttings from multiple parts of ONE pure aniline hide



PULL-UP

Pull-up, or "Star Burst", often occurs with waxy and aniline leathers. This leather characteristic is defined by the appearance of lighter colored areas on a piece of furniture where the leather is stretched or pulled tightly. Pull-up is not a defect, rather, it is a natural characteristic that is caused by the additional tension on the tightly upholstered leather.



SCUFFING

Since pure aniline leathers do not have protective top-coatings, expect to see scuff marks from the upholstery process, shipment, and every day use. Small scuffs will "buff out" or patina with use and time, beautifully preserving the history of the chair's life.

Natural . Real . Unapologetic



Aniline.



FOR LEATHER ENTHUSIASTS

Aniline is the most honest expression of leather you can buy. Aniline leathers get better with age, absorbing minor scratches and nicks gracefully as a beautiful Patina.

Aged Aniline leathers are Pure Anilines that have had a finish added to them. A wax, oil or transparent stain is added to create additional ecstatic appeal. These wax and oil finished leathers will have variation in color when upholstered to the frame, highlighting curves and adding interest to the detailing of the frame. This gives each piece its own distinctive look. Most wax and oil finishes will show scuff marks and emphasize areas of wear. This is a natural feature of Aniline leathers and will give each piece a worn look over time; much like a well loved pair of jeans. Signs of natural beauty markings include healed scars, cuts and insect bites, stretch marks, fat wrinkles, tight pores, backbone impressions and neck wrinkles. Color variations are expected throughout the hide. Though Aged Aniline is slightly less vulnerable to stains and spills than Pure Aniline, neither is recommended for settings where "accidents" are a frequent occurrence as both leathers may permanently stain.

Aniline leather is commonly used for high-end furniture and upscale interior decor items. Its natural beauty makes it an excellent choice for furniture that is meant to be the centerpiece of a room.





Semi-Aniline.



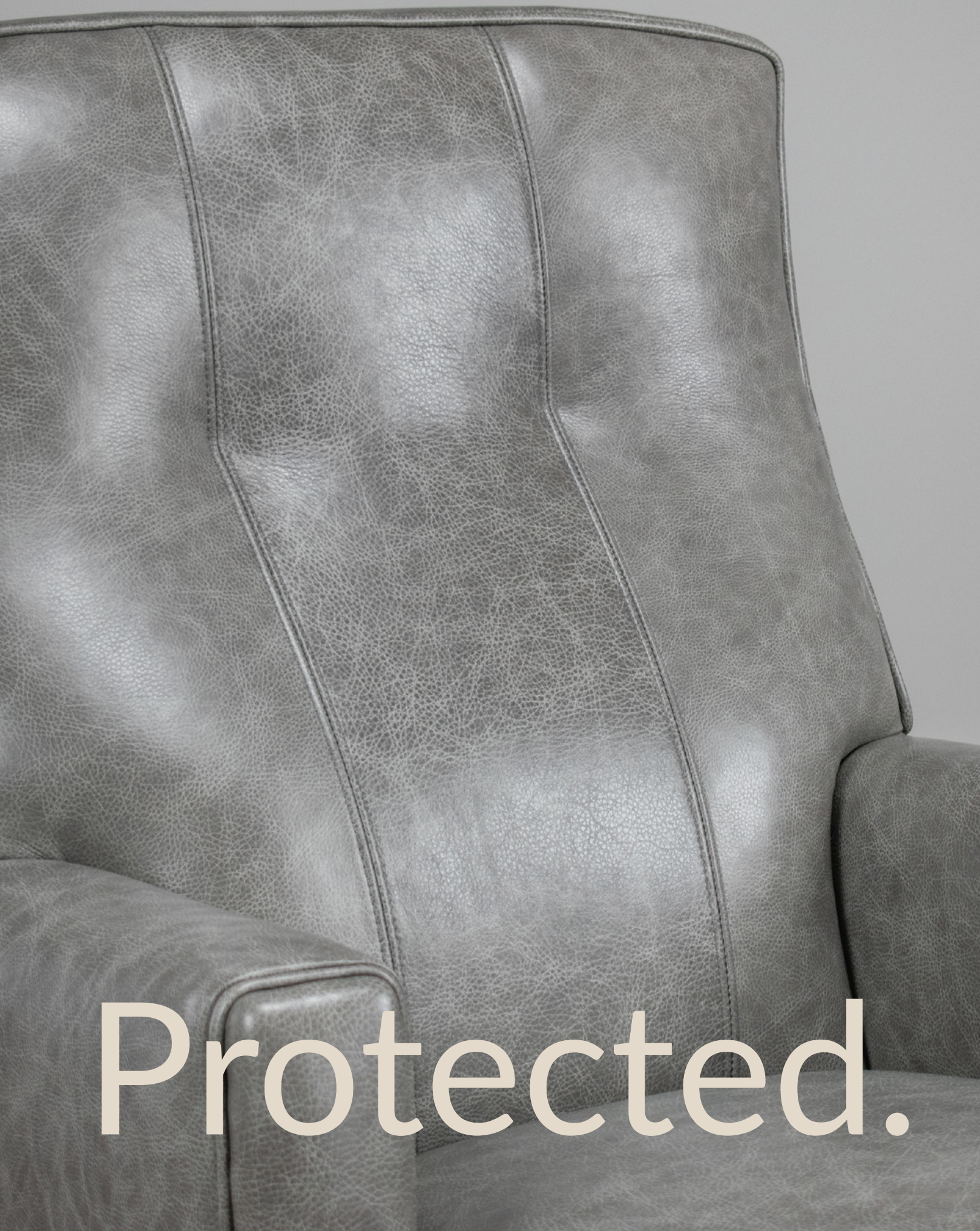
THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Semi-aniline leather offers a perfect balance between the natural beauty of aniline leather and the durability of protected leathers. Often referred to as “Aniline Plus,” this leather is dyed and then coated with matching pigments to create a more uniform color, while still preserving the hide’s natural characteristics.

While semi-aniline leather may not feel as soft or luxurious as pure aniline leather, it remains a highly desirable option in the upholstery industry due to its blend of beauty and practicality. Typically crafted from top-grain leather rather than full-grain leather, this allows for breathability and the development of a patina over time.

Semi-aniline’s robust yet elegant finish makes it a popular choice for family sofas, chairs, and furnishings in vacation homes, offering lasting comfort and appeal.





Protected.



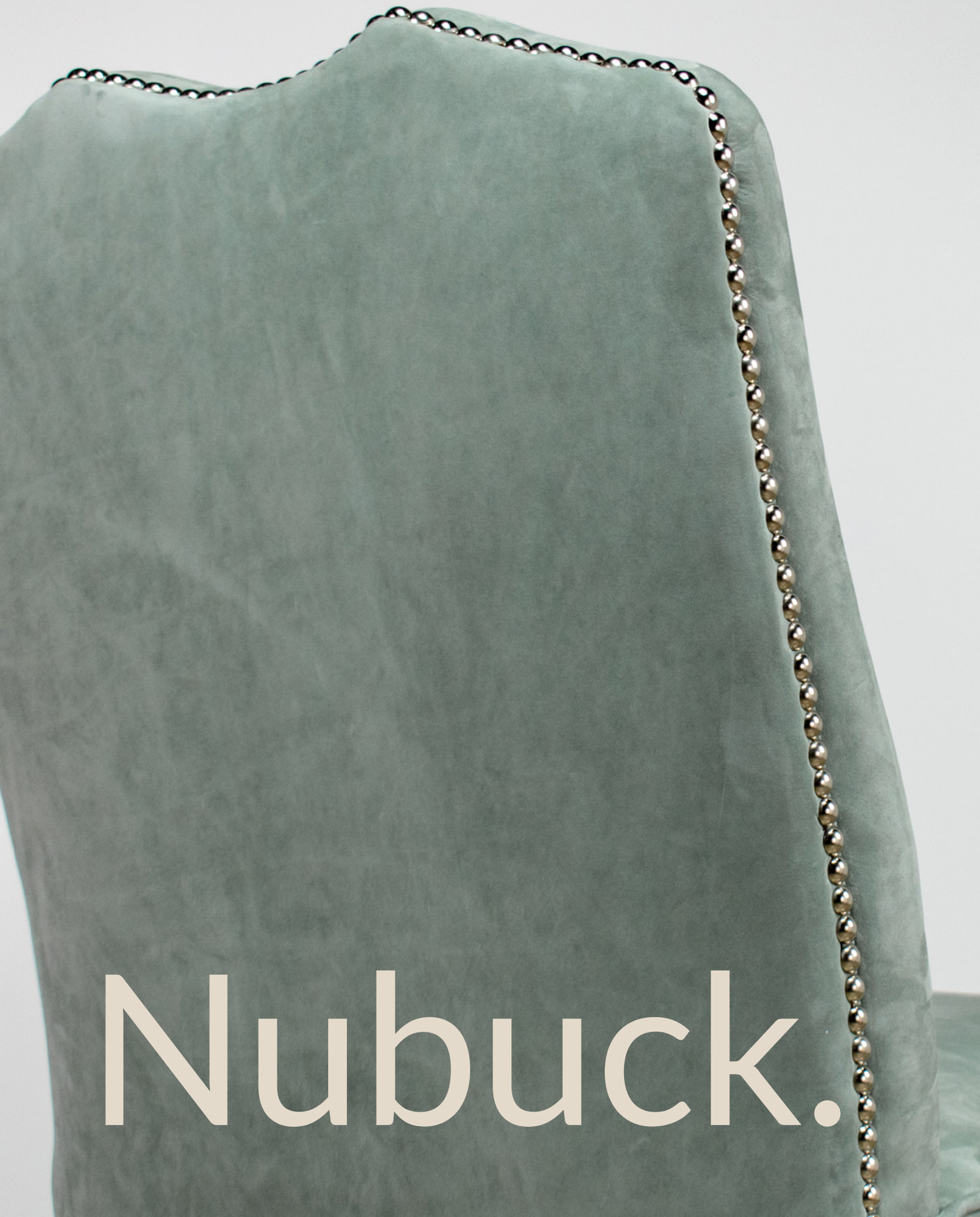
FOR THE ACTIVE HOUSEHOLD

Protected leathers are an excellent choice for those who value exceptional quality and seek durable, high-performance leather that complements their dynamic lifestyle. Protected leathers are dyed in a process similar to painting. This process hides some of the natural characteristics of leather, such as scars, and insures a consistent color range throughout the hide. A clear top coat is added at the end to give it a high resistance to fading, liquids, and stains.

Some Protected leathers receive pigment through a process similar to stain, rather than "paint". Applying a stain allows for more the leathers natural characteristics to be visible; just like when wood is stained, you can see the knots and natural characteristics coming through the applied color. A protective clear coat is added at the end, exactly like the "painted" dye process. Due to the strength of the top coat, protected leathers typically do not have the same soft, supple hand as found in Pure Aniline.

Protected leather is designed for practicality and longevity; valued for its resilience. Protected leather is ideal for active households, offering exceptional durability and easy maintenance without compromising on style or comfort.





Nubuck.



FOR THE STYLE SEEKER

Nubuck is celebrated for its buttery, velvety texture, offering a luxurious tactile experience.

After undergoing an Aniline dyeing process, these top-grain leathers are gently buffed and polished, removing the top cell layer to create a soft nap that enhances both touch and appearance. This process preserves much of the hide's natural beauty, including subtle color variations and distinctive markings, such as healed scars, stretch marks, fat wrinkles, and neck creases.

To further enhance its character, a light wax coating may be applied during finishing, adding visual depth and surface interest. Due to the natural structure of the hide, Nubuck often absorbs dye unevenly, resulting in rich color variations that make each piece truly unique. Its surface is finely brushed to achieve the signature Nubuck "hand," delivering unmatched depth of color and shading that sets it apart from all other leathers.

Nubuck leathers are perfect for those who appreciate sleek, subtle statement pieces and seek to incorporate a touch of understated luxury into their lives.





Suede.



FOR THE DETAIL LOVERS

Suede is crafted by splitting a hide and sanding the inner surface of the split leather, resulting in a soft, raised nap with loosened fibers. This process gives suede its signature texture and velvety feel. The underside of the hide is naturally softer than the exterior but also less durable and more susceptible to stains and environmental wear. While some suede materials may be treated with protective coatings for added resilience, they remain less robust than other types of leather.

Because of its delicate nature, suede is not typically considered for a primary furniture covering. Instead, it serves as a complementary element to elevate the style of a piece. It is most often featured in subtle details like welt or banding, adding a touch of rustic charm and visual texture that enhances the overall design.





Hair-On.



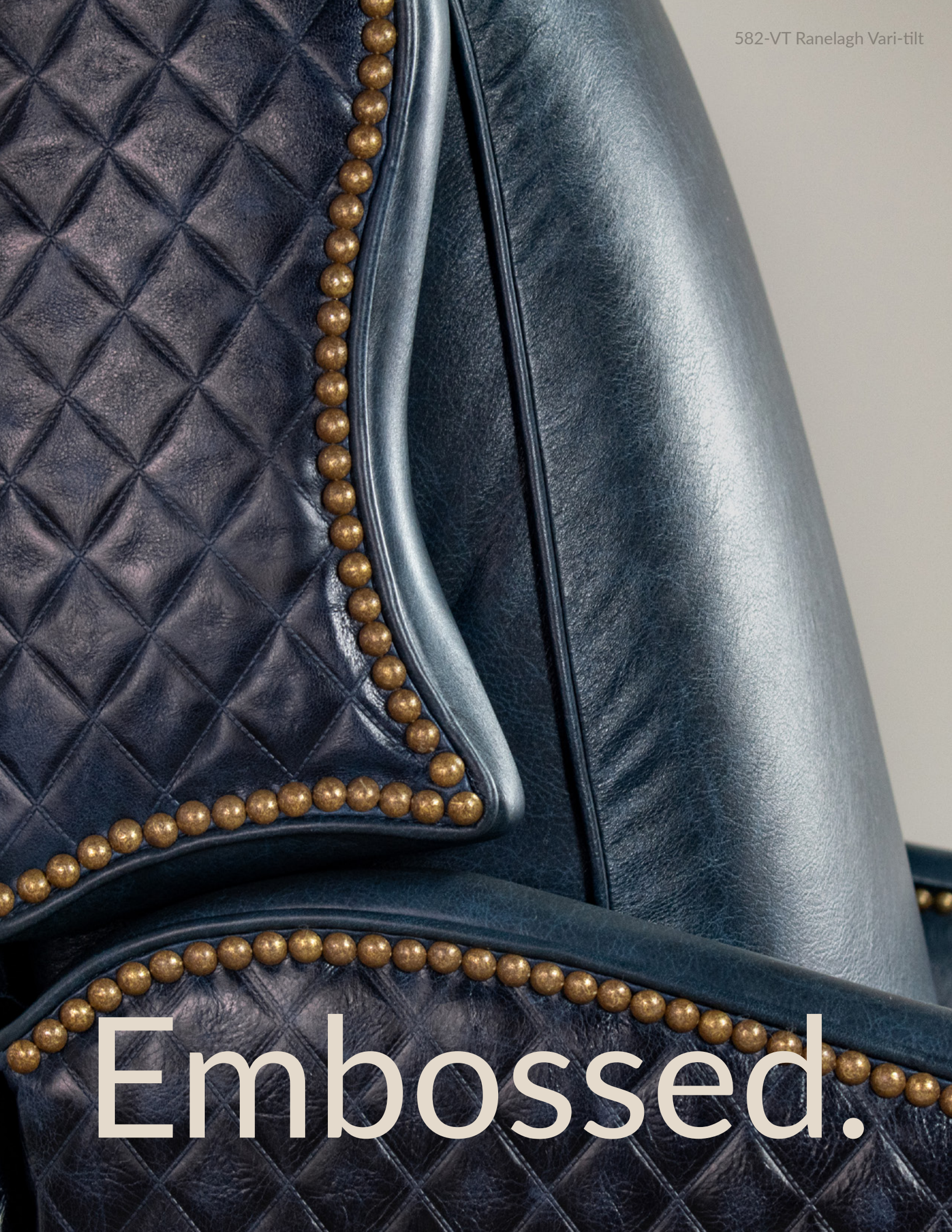
FOR THE NATURALIST

Hair-on hides are incredibly versatile, offering a wide range of natural colors and patterns. While many people picture traditional black and white spots, cows are born with an array of unique and vibrant hide patterns, including white, tricolor, brindle, speckled, salt and pepper, and gray, to name a few. Each hide is one of a kind, ensuring that no two are ever the same.

Much like premium leather, hair-on hides possess a natural beauty that brings individuality to every piece. Furnishings upholstered with these hides showcase their unique charm through distinct color patterns, varying hair lengths, and natural markings. Though hair-on hides have been used in furniture making for centuries, they've seen a resurgence in popularity with modern, innovative applications in design.

These hides can be dyed, printed, or even laser-cut with patterns to add dimension and creativity. This allows for bold and distinctive designs, such as zebra prints or brightly colored pieces, while still using a sustainable material sourced from the cattle industry. Since the leather industry exclusively uses hides from cows farmed for meat and dairy, hair-on hides offer not only a stunning addition to your home but also an environmentally conscious choice.





Embossed.



FOR THOSE WHO CRAVE THE UNIQUE

Embossing is a finishing process where cowhide is stamped or rolled under high pressure to create intricate patterns or designs in the leather. The variety of patterns available is extensive, including motifs like alligator, crocodile, ostrich, floral designs, and geometric shapes, among many others.

This process is typically applied to the grain side of the leather, where the grain structure is compressed to create the design, leaving the uncompressed fibers slightly raised. A more advanced technique, known as two-sided embossing, uses embossing plates on both sides of the hide (positive and negative) to achieve a richly textured, three-dimensional effect that truly stands out.

Common types of embossing include blind embossing, gold embossing, and color imprinting. Blind embossing imprints patterns without any added color, creating a subtle, elegant design. Gold embossing uses gold films for a luxurious finish, while color imprinting incorporates colored films for bold, vibrant results. Each technique enhances the leather's aesthetic, offering a unique combination of texture and visual appeal.





FOR THE RUSTIC

Buffed (or sanded) leather features a pronounced grain with natural markings and a slightly two-tone color finish. The sanding process creates a distinctive patina and a suede-like texture, giving the leather a naturally worn, vintage-inspired appearance.

While most sanded leathers lack a protective coating, some manufacturers may add a topcoat for enhanced durability. These leathers are thicker and more robust than suede, making them a popular choice for those seeking a combination of rugged charm, softness, and durability.

The unique texture and aesthetic of sanded leather, paired with its matte finish, makes it an excellent choice for rustic modern and western-inspired homes.



Hand Rubbed.



FOR THE HERITAGE LOVER

Hand-rubbed leather is a labor-intensive process involves manually applying, or removing, layers of aniline dye until the desired color and depth are achieved. Because this work is done after the pieces have been upholstered, each frame features a one-of-a-kind rub pattern that enhances its individuality.

Expert leather artisans carefully execute this process by hand, blending colors to create a patina rich with depth and character. A protective topcoat is applied at the end to ensure durability and resistance to stains and wear. Subtle natural markings such as healed scars, scratches, and insect bites may be visible, adding to the authenticity and charm of each piece.

Hand-rubbed leather is highly sought after for its unique beauty and is a perfect choice for heirloom-quality or rustic furnishings that exude timeless sophistication.





Caring For Leather

PURE & AGED ANILINE

Direct sunlight will rob these leathers of their richness. Attend to spills immediately with a clean white cloth, blotting, never pressing on the spill. Never use heat or soaps on these leathers. Should a spill penetrate the leather, gently massage the area with a clean white cloth lightly dampened with distilled water. Contact a professional leather cleaner for serious stains.

NUBUCK & SUEDE

Direct sunlight will rob these leathers of their richness. Attend to spills immediately with a clean white cloth, blotting, never pressing on the spill. Never use heat or soaps on these leathers. Should a spill penetrate the leather, allow the spill to dry. Use a suede brush, or vacuum with drapery attachment, and brush the nap. If additional cleaning is required, gently massage the area with a clean white cloth lightly dampened with distilled water. Allow the area to dry and, again, use a suede brush or vacuum with drapery attachment.

PROTECTEDS

Although no material is totally impervious to the fading caused by sunlight, Protected leathers hold up best. Rearranging the furniture on occasion will extend the life of its rich color even further. As for spills, most should blot up without a trace. Routine cleaning with a clean white cloth dampened with distilled water will eliminate the buildup of dirt and oils that can de-color the leather over time and break down the protective coating.

*For More information about cleaning of your leather, you may want to contact **Uniters North America** at (888) 825-6551. This is a company that specializes in the care and cleaning of leather. They have over 200 products for leather and may be able to help you with special cleaning needs or information on how to best protect your leather. They are much like a local dry cleaning company that would handle your silks and linens.

*When Uniters North America products are applied correctly, Leathercraft by OHD will not void their construction warranty covering frame, seating and spring up. Uniters North America is separate company marketing their products across the United States and is in no way affiliated with Our House Designs LLC or Leathercraft Furniture.

Leather In Your Home

Leather furniture needs little to no care in average household conditions. Leather's intricate network of natural fibers make it, by far, the strongest upholstery material used in furniture.



Basic Cleaning

DUST

To remove dust:

Simply use an upholstery attachment on your vacuum cleaner to remove any accumulation of dust.

Alternatively, a lightly dampened cloth will help remove dust; This method is not recommended for suede, nubuck, or sanded leathers.

SPILLS

Most liquids will be initially repelled by leather, but, if left standing over an extended period of time, they may be absorbed.

To wipe up spills:

Blot spilled liquids immediately with a clean, absorbent cloth or sponge.

To remove sticky spills:

Try using clear, like warm water - gently wiping with a soft, dampened sponge. If necessary, add mild soap (skin-care soaps work best for pure aniline leathers).

Clean the entire area where the spill occurred: For example, the entire seat cushion or the entire arm.

Dry with a clean towel and allow to air dry. *Do not use hair dryers, heat guns, or any other heat sources as this will likely damage your leather furniture.*

Guidelines For Living With Leather Furniture

All quality home furnishings are subject to dehydration from environmental or mechanical conditions. Leather is no exception to this, however, it actually performs much better than most cloth upholstery and even wood finishes.



Things To Avoid



HEAT SOURCES & DIRECT SUNLIGHT

Placing your leather furniture next to strong heat sources such as fireplaces, radiators, or in direct sunlight can dry out the natural oils in the leather and cause cracking and stiffening of the leather. The ultraviolet rays in sunlight will eventually fade most natural products and leather is no exception. Ask your dealer for additional guidance regarding color fastness for the leather you are considering.



SHARP OBJECTS

Surface scratches on Pure Aniline leathers often can be rubbed away with your hand.

Protected and semi-protected leathers are difficult to scratch. However, should your furniture be scratched by a sharp object, like a buckle or toy, it is possible to disguise the mark with a felt tip pen of a similar color. Test your technique on a swatch or an inconspicuous area first.

For more intense damage, contact a local leather repair specialists.



AGGRESSIVE CLEANERS & STRONG RUBBING

Gentle wiping with a soft cloth or sponge is all that a vast majority of spills require. Vigorous, prolonged rubbing can damage your leather furniture.

NEVER use abrasive cleaners, saddle soap, oils, detergents, furniture polish, ammonia or colored coarse clothes etc. For leather safe cleaning & care materials, we recommend contacting Unifers North America at (888) 825-6551 or your local leather repair specialist.



MADE BY NATURE | MADE TO LAST

From cradle to grave, leather is one of the most sustainable upholstery products on the market.

Leather is perhaps one of the oldest forms of recycling. By recycling a by-product of the food industry, leather manufacturers are able to create a diverse range of items. From tactile glove leather to rugged walking boots, soft leather jackets to durable furniture, leather is a natural material that is both versatile and long-lasting.

The word “sustainability” is used often these days, but what does it mean? As a broad definition, it’s the ability to produce useful quality goods without depleting natural resources. In a world of constantly changing trends, we believe in producing only heirloom-quality furniture.

We only use select quality leathers, the highest standards of practices, and environmentally safe materials that meet or exceed all California and USA compliance requirements and standards for the furniture industry.

Real leather vs Vegan leather

Vegan leather (also known as leatherette, faux leather, pleather, alternative leather or imitation leather) is a material intended to substitute for real leather. Vegan leather is most often made from Petrochemical-based synthetic materials like polyvinyl chloride (PVC) or polyurethane (PU). These types of materials will not decompose in a landfill for 500 years or more. When they do eventually break down, these materials can release harmful chemicals and microplastics into the water and soil. They also lack the durability and natural beauty of real leather product.



REAL LEATHER

- By-product of the meat industry
- Prevention of 10 million+ tons of animal hide waste annually
- Completely natural material
- Breathable
- Highly durable & long lasting with proper care
- Carbon emissions apx. 17Kg/m²
- Biodegrade in 50 years or less



VEGAN LEATHER(S)

- Non-animal based material
- Often comprised of synthetic, Petrochemical-based materials such as polyurethane or vinyl
- Sometimes comprised of natural materials, like leaves and cork, at a high price-point & lower durability
- Non-breathable
- Low to medium durability; likely needs to be replaced every few years
- Carbon emissions apx. 15.8Kg/m²
- Biodegrade in 500+ years

PRODUCTION MISCONCEPTIONS

- Only naturally occurring, and highly regulated, Chrome III is used for manufacturing chrome-tanned hides, NOT hexavalent chrome (Chrome VI).
- Chemicals are used in every step of leather production, but they are stringently regulated and tanneries provide safe, clean environments to work in.
- Leather production is carried out in a safe manner; chemicals are carefully controlled and good-quality leather does no harm. Quality checks and control of unwanted substances are necessary to protect leather processors and consumers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

There is a lot to learn when it comes to leather! For more detailed information about leather production, sustainability, etc. we suggest visiting www.nothing-to-hide.org or www.leathernaturally.org



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