

DIFFERENT GRADES OF LEATHER



When it comes to leather products, you hear a lot of different terms describing the leather and see a lot of different price points. So why is that? We will walk you through the different leather types so you have a better understanding of the differences and the quality of the different leather types. Understanding the various leather types will also help in understanding the price variations.

What are the different grades of leathers that are available?

Answers given starting with lowest quality to the highest.

Bonded Leather

It is made of bits and scraps of leather that are then “bonded” together with polyurethane binders into a single piece of leather. In the manufacturing process, it is made to look like a single piece of leather, but it lacks the strength of a single piece of hide. The varying degree of organic leather in the mix affects the smell and texture of each product.

Split Grain Leather

Manufacturers typically split hide into the outer layer and inner layer. The outer layer is top grain and the inner layer of the hide is called split grain leather. Because it is a single piece of hide, instead of multiple pieces bonded together, split grain offers more strength and better life than bonded leather. Something labeled “genuine leather” is usually a split grain material.

Top Grain Leather

This is the most common type used in high-end leather products. These products are made from the outer layer of the hide; sanded, buffed, stamped or sprayed to hide imperfections in the leather. Top grain leather is stronger than split grain leather because this outer layer of the hide is the most durable. It typically is less expensive than full grain leather and has greater resistance to stains, as long as the finish remains unbroken.

Full Grain Leather

Leather that is made from the outer layer of the hide and has NOT been sanded, buffed or snuffed to remove imperfections. The beauty of the natural markings is left untouched. Full grain leather is the highest quality leather because it offers strength, durability and appearance. The natural state of the full grain leather with its imperfections and blemishes can be deceiving, since it is the most expensive. It's important to keep in mind that full grain leathers are different in that what looks to be an imperfection or defect is considered character that adds to the beauty of the leather.