



Leather is not just “leather,” there is a nearly endless variety available to designers when choosing leather, and understanding all the options available starts from understanding the various categories that different kinds of leather fall into.



townsend
LEATHER

BIMONTHLY BULLETIN

TOPIC: LEATHER CATEGORIES

Having tools, resources, and knowledge makes any job easier and we know leather characteristics can sometimes be tricky to make sense of. We hope these periodic Bulletins provide you with a bit of useful info you can put to use when proposing leather to your clients. This edition will focus on the different general categories of luxury upholstery leather, especially as classified by us at Townsend Leather, based on more than 40 years of experience in making leather.

After reading, let us know if you have any more questions or if there are any leather-related topics you want us to cover in the future by



contacting a Townsend Leather Partner directly or by emailing us at info@townsendleather.com

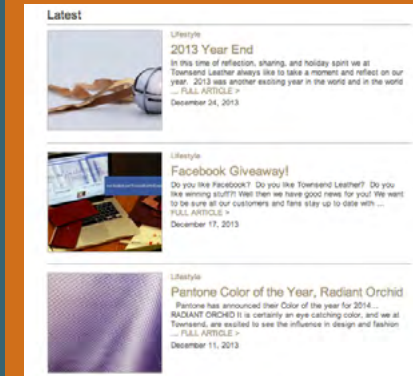
I knew music and movies had categories, but categories of leather?

You betcha!

Don't miss out on what's happening at Townsend Leather; “Like” us on Facebook. See what we're talking about and even get a chance to win a “Liker-Exclusive” prize!

Townsend Leather's Blog is updated weekly and we aim to please our readers, with a plethora of information and discussion around fashion, design, and leather trends. It is the best place to see what is new at Townsend, in the world of design, and in the industry.

You can catch up on what we've been doing in our recent year-end retrospective post, or see some inspiration from Pantone's Color of the Year announcement.



Because leather is a natural material, it has the potential to be produced into a multitude of final products with vastly different looks. There are many different ways to process leather for different end results. At Townsend, we review each hide individually for its qualities, determine its grade, and then decide what end product each hide would make.

Most of Townsend's leathers can be classified into just a small number of basic categories (some products may overlap and be a part of 2 or more categories). Understanding these categories and classifications is important because it will help you best select the most appropriate leather for your intended application. This way you can



ANILINE



FINISHED



EMBOSSSED



HAND TIPPED

feel assured you have chosen the leather with the traits that best work for the expectations of its use, including the following: wear & performance, natural markings or the lack thereof, aesthetics, inherent color variation, cutting yield, and so on.

ANILINE & FINISHED CATEGORIES & THEIR TRAITS.

ANILINE leather is leather that is aniline-dyed with a soft, supple texture, or hand, and that does NOT have a pigment finish. The most recognized examples of Aniline leathers are nubuck and suede. It is leather that is very close to its natural state.

Aniline leather is made through a process of dyeing the raw material with various color dyes. The natural variations in color, tone, and texture of leather are highlighted during this process. For lovers of natural products and inherent variation, Aniline is a great choice. Each Aniline hide's history and natural markings are shown and bring out qualities unique to each hide, a quality that man-made, engineered textiles do not have. Aniline leather is different from Finished leather in that the dye does not provide full coverage of the hide and therefore Aniline leather is less consistent, less uniform, and less protected than Finished leathers. This can be seen as natural beauty by most, but it does make this type of leather more subject to soiling, fading, and wear and therefore, Aniline leathers are usually most appropriate for less demanding applications or lower wear areas.

FINISHED leather is defined as leather that is aniline-dyed with a “pigmented finish” surface. Finished leather is aniline-dyed in the same way as Aniline leather, but it has additional topcoats applied to the surface to add consistency and protection from staining. Finished leathers may still have natural grain character and a soft comfortable hand which creates an aesthetically-pleasing leather. Finished leathers can also be embossed with a wide variety of grains or designs as can aniline leathers. Townsend's Finished leather is still very supple and natural, but the mechanical spray application of pigmented formula and topcoat, allows for the appearance of fewer defects and it has more protection than Aniline leather. The finish acts as a barrier and provides protection from soiling, fading, and wear.

Aniline and Finished Leathers are the two main categories most leathers can be categorized into, but some leathers can be further classified into two additional categories as outlined below.

EMBOSSED & HAND TIPPED CATEGORIES & THEIR TRAITS.

Embossed and Hand Tipped leathers are not necessarily their own stand-alone categories, but rather they imply added processes have been done on certain leathers.

EMBOSSED leathers are those that have been given a distinctive pattern or texture that is not inherent in the natural leather at its most natural state. Embossing is done by applying

heat and pressure to the leather through engraved or etched plates or rolls. Embossing designs can be nearly anything and vary greatly in size. Some embossings are an imitation of natural leather grain, different types of animal skins, geometric patterns, decorative looks, or custom designs. Both Finished and Aniline leathers can be embossed. With leather being a natural product, there can be variation in the pattern depth, adding to the natural beauty of leather. Also there are physical limitations of some plates and rolls and this can cause visible match lines and smaller available cuts. Always check with the product label or your Townsend rep to be sure your design will accommodate the cut size needed for the final application. Embossing provides a beautiful way to make your leather look unique.



HAND TIPPED (OR SOMETIMES CALLED HAND RUBBED) leathers are those that have literally been rubbed by hand to create a finish effect. There are a large variety of looks and techniques that can be created by hand tipping or hand rubbing. Pigment is applied by hand to the surface of the leather. This can be a tone on tone look, or a rub-off look, it can give alternate shading or an antique look. Tipping can be applied over an embossed design to highlight and give dimension to the pattern or texture. Since this is done by hand, variance in design and color should be expected as part of the natural beauty of this leather. From hide to hide and even within a hide, you will see inconsistency and variation. Hand Tipping and Hand Rubbing will often also accentuate or emphasize a hide's natural characteristics, not hide them. Both Aniline and Finished leathers can be hand tipped. For this type of leather, a memo sample is not always representative of the overall look or all of the characteristics to be expected in a whole hide or larger piece of leather due to the hand-crafted nature of these leathers.

Quick reference:

ANILINE: No finish/top coat protective layer (common examples are nubuck and suede)

FINISHED: Protective coating (most common leather chosen for seating and other high wear applications - most common example is Townsend's Classic)

EMBOSSED: Design or texture pressed into the leather

HAND TIPPED: Additional color or effect applied by hand

On the next page, we have provided a tool sheet that will classify each of Townsend Leather's major product lines into the appropriate category or categories for your quick reference.

See you next edition! Let us know if you have any leather questions you want answered at info@townsendleather.com.



ANILINE



FINISHED



EMBOSSED



HAND TIPPED

PRODUCT NAME	PREFIX	FINISHED	ANILINE	EMBOSSSED	HAND TIPPED (OR RUBBED)
ANCIENT GAUFRAGE COWHIDE	GFN		X	X	X
ANILINE GAUFRAGE COWHIDE	GFA		X	X	X
ANTIQUE GLAZE LAMBSKIN	AG		X		X
ANTIQUE LEGENDS COWHIDE	AL	X			
ARTURO FUENTE GLAZED COWHIDE	GC		X		X
BRUSHED METALLIC COWHIDE	BM		X		X
BRUSHED METALLIC LAMBSKIN	BML		X		X
CLASSIC COWHIDE	CL	X			
COUTURE COWHIDE	COU		X		X
DELUXE NUBUCK COWHIDE	DEN		X	X	
EXPRESSIONS COWHIDE	XP		X	X	X
FAB FOILS COWHIDE	FAB		X		
FAB FOILS EMBOSSSED COWHIDE	EFAB		X	X	
FIERCE FISH COWHIDE	FF		X	X	X
GALUCHAT COWHIDE	GL	X		X	X
GAUCHO SUEDE COWHIDE	GCH		X	X	X
GAUFRAGE BRUSHED METALLIC COWHIDE	GBM		X	X	X
GLAMOUR COWHIDE	GLM	X			

PRODUCT NAME	PREFIX	FINISHED	ANILINE	EMBOSSSED	HAND TIPPED (OR RUBBED)
LEATHER ESSENTIALS COWHIDE	LES		X	X	X
METALLIC STINGRAY COWHIDE	MSR	X		X	X
MILANO GAUFRAGE COWHIDE	MIG		X	X	X
MILANO SEREPENTE COWHIDE	MIS		X	X	X
NUBUCK COWHIDE	NU		X		
PARIS COWHIDE	PRS	X		X	X
PERFECTLY PEBBLED COWHIDE	PP	X		X	X
RAZZLE DAZZLE COWHIDE	RD		X	X	X
SERENATO SUEDE COWHIDE	SE		X		
SOFT SUEDE COWHIDE	SS		X		
TAJ COWHIDE	TJ	X			
TAJ EMBOSSSED COWHIDE	ETJ	X		X	
TIMEPIECE COWHIDE	TI	X			
VERTUCCI CALFSKIN	VCF		X		X
VERTUCCI DEERSKIN	VDE		X		X
VITELLO CALFSKIN	VT	X			
WET LEATHER DEW COWHIDE	WLD	X		X	X
WET LEATHER MIST COWHIDE	WLM	X		X	X



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