



# Discovering LEATHER GOODS



The term  
"leather goods"  
covers a great  
variety of products.

The category of fine leather goods is large. It includes bags for ladies or men, pocket items (wallets, card cases, etc.), sports and travel goods (attaché cases, suitcases, cases, backpacks, etc.), saddlery-harness articles (saddles, harness, kneepads for riders, etc.), items for hunting and fishing (cartridge pouches, rifle-cases, baskets, etc.), and also belts, wrist-watches and pets' accessories.

Let's take as an example the manufacture of a leather article with a lining made of synthetic material. These are the accessories most carried and worn in everyday life and yet few people are aware of the many operations involved in producing them.

# Manufacture

**PATTERN CUTTING.** The model is chosen from among a great number of patterns presented by various **fashion coordinators**. The selection criteria are defined by the whims of fashion and the purpose for which the product is intended. The **pattern** or model-maker creates the flat model, either manually or using CAD, that will be used in the making of the press-knives used for cutting.



**STORE.** The list of the materials required is given to the storekeeper in charge of putting them together (leather, textiles, reinforcements, etc.). The **hides** go through a rigorous selection procedure. The panels are joined according to their position on the bag so as to give the same colour, same grain, etc.

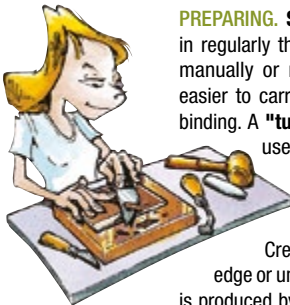
**CUTTING.** Once any faults in the leather have been eliminated or carefully positioned the cutter starts cutting the pieces by hand, on a press, or by automatic cutting. He has to take into account the **lending** (direction of stretching) and choose the best **position** so as to get the most out of the available surface.



**COLOURING.** To **conceal** the raw edge of the leather each piece is covered with a layer of **dye**. Tests are carried out beforehand to determine the colouring that most closely matches that of the leather.



**SPLITTING.** **Splitting** is vital to obtain the ideal thickness and to allow components to be put together in the best way possible. If necessary, each piece of leather is divided in two horizontally.



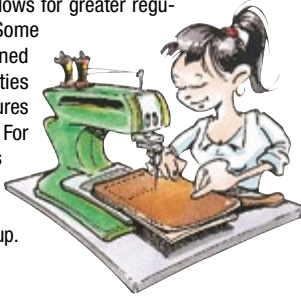
**PREPARING.** **Skiving**, which consists in regularly thinning the edges either manually or mechanically, makes it easier to carry out edge turning and binding. A **"turned edge"** is the term used to describe an edge that has been covered with adhesive and turned over on itself.

Creasing is used to thin a cut edge or underline a stitch. The **filet** is produced by hot pressing, manually or mechanically.

**ASSEMBLING.** Assembling pre-glued pieces calls for accuracy and skill from the operator; it remains a **manual** operation. Once the pieces have been super-imposed, an **overcut tool** is used to eliminate any excess material and to obtain sharp edges.



**CLOSING AND LASTING.** Straps, shoulder straps, gussets, canvas or PVC linings, zippers, edges, etc. are stitched using sewing machines. Whether the machine used is a flat bed machine, a cylinder bed machine or a post-bed machine, it allows for greater regularity in the stitches. Some articles may be machined in considerable quantities due to the special features of the various frames. For example, the **gussets** are assembled on the **cylinder bed machine** which facilitates sewing up.



**HAND SEWING.** Hand-sewn seams provide certain products with a traditional appearance and reliability (long life, strength): using an **awl**, the leather is perforated to enable a needle with coated thread to sew the leather. This operation calls for skill from the operator: the stitches have to be as regular as if they were pricked by a machine. Nevertheless they have a special appearance which is difficult to obtain mechanically.



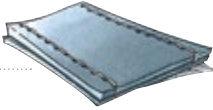
**FASTENING ACCESSORIES.** The parts thus assembled turn flat, two-dimensional pieces into three-dimensional articles. The product is almost finished. **Buckles, press buttons** or **clasps** remain to be fastened. As in the field of personal adornment, the word "**jewellery**" is used to refer to accessories made of brushed metal, chromed metal or goldplated metal that decorate fine leather goods.



**FINISHING.** Finishing is a delicate operation requiring great skill. It gives the final touch to a product. The various parts are overlaid to create a **section** which has to be sanded between the layers of dye. The article is wrapped in canvas bags or **tissue paper** ready for delivery.

# Types of binding

Upper and under element with raw edges



**SADDLE STITCHING**  
**Saddlery.**

Example: belt, briefcase, harness.

Folded upper element  
Raw edge under element



**COMBINED CEMENT AND STITCHING BINDING**  
**Saddlery, leather goods.**

Example: assembly of gussets of ladies' bags, belts, small bags.

**PASTED ASSEMBLY**  
**Leather goods.**

Example: evening bag - small luxury bag.



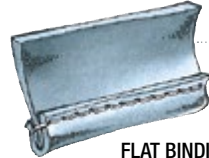
**ASSEMBLY TURNED OVER WITHOUT EDGING, CALLED "ORDINARY"**  
**Leather goods, saddlery.**

Example: standard quality articles.



**ENGLISH BINDING ASSEMBLY**  
**Leather goods.**

Example: articles made of canvas.



Upper and lower sections assembled by a flat binding

**FLAT BINDING**  
**Leather goods.**

Example: articles made of canvas and leather to give a nice finish.

**TURNED-EDGE BINDING WITH WELT, CORD OR EDGING**

**Leather goods, saddlery.**

Example: large articles (travel bags)



Emphasises the purity of the line; decorative.

Upper element folded onto lower part:



**TURNED EDGE BINDING**

**Small leather articles.**  
Example: wallet, purse.

**TURNED OVER BINDING, KNOWN ALSO AS "BETWEEN GRAIN AND FLESH SIDE"**

**Saddlery.**

Example: dog collar, umbrella handle, riding-crop, cane, pipe.



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**"A L'ALLEMANDE" ASSEMBLY**  
**Saddlery, leather goods.**

Example: allows the extension of a bag.



**TURNED OVER BINDING ASSEMBLY CALLED "SEAM ANGLE"**

**Saddlery.**

Example: hand-sewn or machine-sewn (cases, purses, jewel cases, etc.).

