

MAISON
SESSIONI

How to choose SUSTAINABLE LEATHER

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
LINEAPELLE

Introduction

Of all the sustainable materials, leather is the one that, due to its origin, history and innovation, is the one that attracts most attention. And when it comes to luxury items, be they shoes, bags or accessories, it is still leather that is perceived as being the most desirable.

Leather's unique positioning is down to its structural characteristics and also its history that runs in parallel to that of human evolution. The story dates all the way back to 5,000 years BC when the Sumerians of Mesopotamia used animal skins to make long robes and diadems.

Centuries later, the Egyptians, Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans all honed their considerable skills as they crafted tools, weapons and harnesses, as well as clothes, footwear and accessories.

However, it is not until the 20th century that the era of modern tanning begins, with process mechanisation and the use of chemicals. And it is at the end of this century that we moved into the current era with sustainability becoming a guiding principle for tanning processes and the entire fashion industry.

SUSTAINABILITY AND THE FUTURE

The fashion world accepts the challenge of the need for increased sustainability. We openly question and debate new processes that show greater respect for the environment, the supply chain and the individual, not just economic growth.

Tim Jackson, Professor of Sustainable Development at the University of Surrey (UK), summarised this new philosophy at the Copenhagen Fashion Summit in 2021: "... my idea of post-growth is to think to a situation where economies are perhaps more dedicated to what it means to thrive in human terms and less dedicated only to chasing economic expansion and continuous growth all the time..."

This new way of thinking has led to skilled artisans searching for innovative ways to reduce the environmental impact of their work, and to ensure that their products are sustainable in every way possible. They strive not only to meet the strictest ethical and moral principles but also to satisfy the demand of millions of global consumers who desire to live in a 'green' and 'sustainable' world.

CERTIFICATIONS

However, the commitment of these well-meaning individuals is not enough. That's why governments have introduced national and international legislation to raise standards and prevent issues such as 'Green Washing' from diluting the work of all those of us who have chosen to take the difficult steps to address these challenges for real. These steps have taken us down a path in which regulations, traceability and product have become fundamental to the decisions we make on the ways we do business. They involve an ongoing dialogue with third party organisations, like Intertek, dedicated to enabling companies to do things in the right way.

To ensure that they are meaningful and genuine, sustainable measures need to be properly controlled and monitored: all the way from the process to the products, and from chemical safety to performance characteristics. That's how the likes of Intertek can help us attain the skills, accreditations, technologies and services that we all need to make the supply chain for leather truly sustainable.

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