

## LEARNIN' THE LINGO

If you are reading this, then you are already ahead of the game; you are more "in-the-know" than most where leather is concerned. But since we understand the complex pressures on our customers these days, we want to help you to learn and understand as much as you can about what you are specifying and ordering as possible. We want to pull you into the "leather club" and give you the meaning of many of the commonly-used leather phrases and keywords. Many of these leather terms are general to the leather industry; some are specific to Townsend Leather's own terminology.

It is our hope that you find this to be a valuable reference tool that enables you to speak with your customers with more confidence and with a more thorough understanding of many aspects of leather. Now onto all the leather lingo, from A to Z!

**Aniline:** Leather that is colored all the way through with a transparent dye. The effect is applied by immersing the leather in a dye bath. Because the finish is transparent and shows the natural markings of the leather, only the best quality hides can be used.

**Antiqued:** Leather that is dyed with one color over another (usually darker over lighter) so as to create rich highlights and an aged appearance. Also called distressed leather.

**Buffed Leather:** Leather from which the enamel surface has been removed by abrasion. Often known as nubuck.

**Center Cut Hides:** Term used by Townsend Leather to denote hide size of gaufage-embossed leathers that have been cropped at the bellies to form a boxier and more usable shape.

### Cutting For Approval

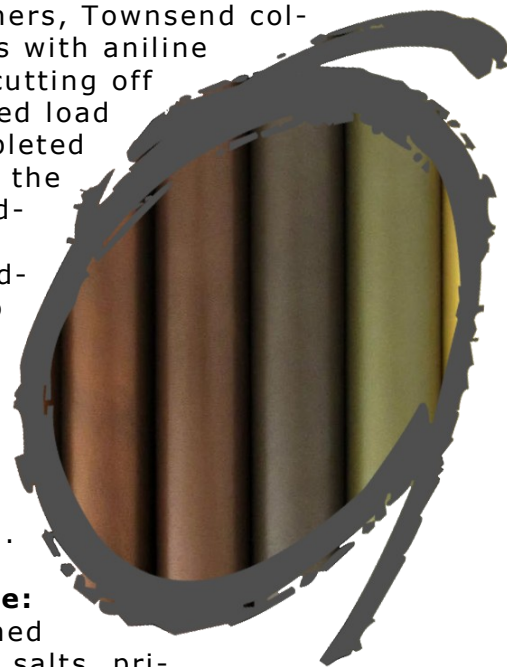
**(also known as CFA):** A CFA is a sample of the leather from the ac-

tual dye lot; for made-to-order or custom leathers, Townsend colors the hides with aniline dyes and a cutting off of this colored load is then completed to represent the finished product. At this point, any adjustments to color, texture, or finish can be made before the whole order is completed.

### Chrome Tannage:

Leather tanned in chromium salts, primarily basic chromium sulfate resulting in soft, mellow hides receptive to excellent color variety. Currently the most widely used tannage in the world.

**Colored Crust:** Hides that have already been colored with aniline dyes and are "compatible" with the final color desired that will be applied by pigment finish or em-



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bossing and hand-tipping.

**Combination Tannage:** Leathers tanned with more than one tanning agent, such as chrome and vegetable together, resulting in both softness and body in skins.

**Corrected Grain:** Leather that has been buffed to remove blemishes, then embossed with a modified grain created using pigments and other finishes.

**Crocking:** Transferring of color or finish from leather to other materials by rubbing or abrasion.

**Crust:** Leather which has been tanned (treated to become non-perishable) but not colored or otherwise finished.



**Custom Leather:** Term indicating a leather is not a company standard but rather is new and unique in color, texture, and/or finish from the standard offerings.

**Distressed Leather:** Another term for antiqued leather. Distressed leather is coated with a wax finish and then milled in order to create a worn, natural appearance. Due to its genuine look, each hide will have its own unique color variation.

**Drum Dyeing:** The process of coloring leather by tumbling it in a rotating drum immersed in dye. A very effective method allowing maximum dye penetration.

**Embossed Leather:** Leather that has been "stamped" with a design or grain texture under very high pressure. Used, for example, to create imitation alligator hide.

**Enhanced Grain:** Leather that has been embossed with a modified texture to imitate a natural grain and create a more uniform surface.

**Fat Wrinkle:** Wrinkles in the grain of leather caused by fat deposits in the animal that create beauty in the leather. Fat wrinkles are not visible in imitation grain leather.

**Finish:** Any enhancing effect applied to leather after it has been tanned. Examples are dyeing, embossing, buffing, antiquing, waxing, waterproofing, and so on.

**Full Grain Leather:** Leather which has not been altered beyond hair removal. Full grain leather is the most genuine type of leather, as it retains all of the original texture and markings of the original hide.

**Gaufrage:** A unique embossing process that creates upholstery leather of exceptional softness and beauty. The design impression is transferred to the leather by an engraved roller under high heat and low pressure for a soft natural hand without pattern match lines. Townsend's Gaufrage Leathers come as Center Cut Hides.

**Glazed Leather:** Aniline-dyed leather which has been polished to a high luster by passing through glass or steel rollers under great pressure.

**Glove Leather:** Lambskin or other very soft leather, typically used for gloves.

**Grain:** A word used to describe the natural characteristics of an unprocessed hide, such as its pores, wrinkles, markings, and texture.

**Grain (Leather):** The outside of the hide or skin consisting of the pores, wrinkles, and other characteristics which constitute the natural texture of the leather.

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**H and:** A word used to describe the feel (i.e. softness or fullness) of leather, typically regarding upholstery leather.

**Hand-Tipping:** Process wherein the characteristic finish effect (pigment) is applied by hand; most of Townsend's embossed leathers are additionally hand-tipped to highlight the pattern; because this is a hand-applied effect, variation within a hide and from hide to hide should be expected.

**Handiwork / Hand Antique:** Leather that is finished with one color over another so as to create rich highlights and an aged appearance. This is done by hand, either wiping a darker color on over a lighter base color or wiping the dark color off.

**Loose Grain:** Term for when the grain or pebbling of the hide is spread out and noticeably different than surrounding areas.

**M ade-to-Order Leather:** Term indicating a leather is a company standard leather but not currently in-stock so it requires a production lead time.

**Matte Finish:** A flat or dull finish.

**Metamerism:** The effect that occurs when two objects are perceived to be the same color under one light source but appear to be unlike in color under a different light source; because of metamerism, it is important to examine leather samples under the same lighting of the intended space.

**N aked Leather:** Leather that is aniline-dyed but has no additional finish which might mask or alter the natural state of the leather.

**Nap:** Describes the soft, "fuzzy" effect achieved in leather by buffing or brushing.

**Natural Grain:** A leather that displays its original grain.

**Neck Wrinkles:** Wrinkles in the grain in the neck area of the hide caused by fat deposits in and natural stretching of the animal's neck during its lifetime.

**Natural Markings:** General term for all kinds of visible imperfections on the hide, including insect bites and scars.

**Nubuck:** A leather whose surface has been buffed and brushed to create a soft, velvety effect. Differs from suede in that while suede is created from the flesh (inner) side of a hide, nubuck is created using the grain (outer) side, giving it added strength and durability.

**O il Tanned:** Leather that is tanned using oils to create a very soft, pliable finish.

**Open Scars (also known as "Opens"):** General term for any kind of small hole or open "wound" that is visible in the hide.

**Patina:** The aura or luster that develops in a quality piece of leather with age.

**Pearl / Pearl Crust:** Leather which has been chrome tanned but not dyed or otherwise finished. Chromium salts cause the tanned hides to be light blue (pearl) in color.



**Perforated:** Leather in which a pattern of small holes is stamped using a die; comes as sides only.

**Pigmented Leather:** Leather that has been coated with a surface color on top of or instead of the usual dye finish. Leather is usually pigmented to add durability and uniformity and hide natural blemishes.

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**Plating:** The process of pressing leather under a heated plate. Often used in upholstery leather to create a more uniform surface.

**Pull-up:** Describes the behavior of leather that has been treated with oils, waxes, and dyes in such a way that when the leather is pulled or stretched (i.e. on upholstery), the finish becomes lighter in the stretched areas. Considered a mark of high quality.

**Retan:** A modifying secondary tannage applied after intermediate operations following the primary tanning.

**Semi-Aniline:** Aniline leather to which a matching

pigment layer is added to even out the color and add protection.



**Side Leather:** Leather made from one half, or "side," of a full hide. Typically refers to leather whose top grain (outermost layer) has been left intact.

**Skive:** To shave, slice or divide; to peel into a thin layer.

**Snuffed:** The grain surface is abraded with brushes, emery wheel, or sandpaper. Leather is snuffed for the purpose of removing defective grain, or for sueding the surface of the leather.

**Stock Dye Lot Cutting For Approval:** This kind of CFA is from a completed dye lot and is meant to be representative of the dye lot. Stock Dye Lot Cuttings usually cannot be adjusted and must be accepted as is.

**Strike-Off Sample (also known as SKO):** A strike-off sample is a hand sample piece of leather created to meet a customer's vision for color, texture, and/or fin-

ish. Strike-off samples are produced by Townsend at no charge.

**Spectrophotometer:** A spectrophotometer is an instrument used to measure properties of light over a specific portion of the electromagnetic spectrum and is used by Townsend as a tool to help achieve and determine color accuracy; this tool is only applicable for finished products that do not have any special effects added.

**Split Leather:** Leather made from the lower (inner or flesh side) layers of a hide that have been split away from the upper, or grain, layers. Split leather is more fragile than side leather or full-grain leather, and is typically used in the form of suede.

**Suede:** Split leather that has been buffed and brushed to create a fuzzy surface feel.

**Two-tone / Tone-On-Tone:** An effect created by applying layers of similar or contrasting dyes to a piece of leather in order to create a mottled or aged appearance. Antiqued and Sauvaged leathers are examples of two-tone leathers.

**Upholstery Leather:** Leather created from a whole hide and intended for use in furniture, automobiles, airplanes, and other upholstery applications.

**Veins:** Blood vessels in the animal that carry blood to the heart; veins are more prevalent in hides these days due to today's tanning practices.

**Vegetable Tanning:** A method of hide tanning which utilizes organic materials such as bark instead of the traditional chemicals. Vegetable tanned leather has greater body and firmness than traditionally-tanned leather.

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**Water Repellant:** Townsend Leather offers the addition of 3M Scotchgard™ Protector to help repel water and oil, improve cleanability, and to generally keep the leather looking beautiful longer.



**Weight:** A term which describes the heaviness or thickness of leather. Typically given in ounces per square foot or millimeters (thickness).

**For Leather**

**Whole Hide:** Refers to leather created using a full hide, as opposed to a side, and typically intended for use as upholstery leather.

**Zebra Hair-on Cowhides:** Zebra Stenciled Prints and other Faux Exotic Hair-on Cowhides are available upon special request.



Townsend Leather has over 40 years of experience and knowledge to draw on and we love to talk about our passion! So if you have any questions about any of these terms or anything else related to leather, let us know! We would love to help you!

You can always contact us at [info@townsendleather.com](mailto:info@townsendleather.com) or you can call 518-762-2764.

We hope you have found this glossary of terms beneficial and useful.

We also hope you keep it handy so you can learn to speak the lingo of leather.

