

Full Grain vs. Top Grain Leather

Spinneybeck full grain leathers are superior to top grain leathers.

They are stronger. Full grain leathers have greater tensile strength and are less likely to 'puddle' than leathers which have lost the surface layers. Top grain leathers have had the upper portion of the dermis removed therefore losing the strongest, tightest, and most dense part of the hide. They are not as strong as full grain leathers and will permanently stretch over time. Whereas properly maintained full grain leather will never look worn and will outwear textiles and top grain leather many times over. Since fabrics are woven, changes in their appearance from age and use detract from their beauty. Leather will absorb body oils during use and enhance the leather's appearance over time. This improvement in appearance is called patina and it's a unique characteristic of natural leather.

They are more comfortable. Full grain leathers breathe and ventilate body heat away from the body, allowing them to remain cool and comfortable in summer while not becoming cold and rigid in winter. Conversely, top grain leathers have their surfaces clogged with heavy applications of finish and will not wick away heat. In addition, they feel artificial as silicone-based fillers are used to patch holes and deep barbed wire scars and does not adjust to your body temperature nor wick away moisture.

They are more beautiful. Full grain leathers produced from the highest quality of raw materials have depth of color and require less finish, allowing their natural markings to show. The light, natural finish will not crack or peel and will develop a beautiful protective patina over time.

They are more supple. Full grain leathers are natural, supple, and provide a robust hand. This natural characteristic adds to the luxury, value, and comfort of the leather and is not evident in lower grade top grain leathers.

They are longer lasting. Full grain leathers, which have all of their natural properties intact, will breathe and will maintain high moisture content and a proper pH balance. Top grain leathers receive heavy applications of finish which seal the surface. The pore structure is removed preventing the leather to breathe.

They have a larger hide yield. An average of 80–90 percent yield per hide provides a lower waste factor than top grain corrected material meaning less square footage is required and a lower waste factor for cutting patterns.



Full Grain Hide

Characteristics of Full Grain Leather

No matter how advanced the tannery, each and every piece of leather produced is unique in character. A quality hide's natural origins are displayed on its surface. Look for these essential characteristics of full grain quality:

- Fat wrinkles or growth lines: subtly shaded bands on the grain side of a hide
- Natural variations in grain texture and shading.
- Small scars: on a quality product they do not render large portions of the hide unusable.
- A similar shade of color on the suede side: this demonstrates superior base dye penetration.
- The depth and shading of color on the grain side is comparable to that of a transparent color stain on a piece of fine hardwood furniture

Choosing full grain leather is the smart, long-term solution if comfort, quality, and durability are important.