

Leather is my Job!



Through the EU-sponsored project, 'Leather is my Job!', COTANCE and industriAll-European Trade Union are proud to present the faces and stories of the men and women who have devoted their careers to making leather. Their testimonies should serve to break down the preconceptions and prejudices that affect the leather industry and inspire a new generation of leather workers.

This leaflet presents a snapshot of their experience. To discover more, please go to <http://www.euroleather.com/leather-is-my-job>

Europe's tanneries offer excellent opportunities, where young people can realise their potential in an industry that knows no borders and that is as necessary as it has always been.

Join the leather industry, bring your talent and achieve your ambitions. This is a challenging career but, as these testimonies attest, a worthy and rewarding one.

"Not a job you learn in books"

Stéphane Mariet
finishing supervisor, Tannerie Bodin-Joyeux



"Tanning is kind of an art"

Leticia Melo dos Santos
Institute for Creative Leather Technology





«I like the great **diversity** of issues to be solved; the fact that it involves both desk work and field work, while constantly improving the process in response to changes in legislation»

*Gabriel Popescu,
Environmental Officer, Pielorex SA, Romania*



«It's a fascinating job and we are relatively few doing it. We feel like a **big family**»

*René Geupel,
Operation supervisor, Sudleder GmbH, Germany*



«Have an **open mind** and give it a go!»

*Michelle Oglesby,
Dispatch manager,
Hutchings and Harding Ltd, UK*

«Women have a certain **sensitivity** for aesthetics, for the finishings, the colours, the quality... we feel it, we live it... it is at the tips of our fingers»

*Mari Rodriguez,
Machine operator,
Curtidos Badia SA, Spain*



«If you are patient, responsible, have interpersonal skills, willingness and capacity to **learn every day**, the tanning industry is the place to be»

*Marc Rovira, Quality control and floor manager,
Curtidos Riba Guixa*



«People would be **impressed** with what is done in a tannery»

*Matthew French,
Leather operative,
Pittards Leather, UK*



«An industry which brings quality, **craftmanship and technology** together in a product – leather»

*Panaiot Panaiotov,
Manager, Tehnomat Mercuriy,
Bulgaria*

«I didn't understand the **complexity** of being a tanner until I got my degree as leather technician. Now, with practical experience, I enjoy the variety of my job»

*Osman Yildirim,
Production supervisor,
Bader GmbH, Germany*





«The outcome of finishing gives me great satisfaction. The leather is refined; it has a uniform colour, a certain gloss or touch as appropriate, a uniformity of the surface, which are **part of your soul** and effort put in during work»

*Maria Dulceata, Finishing operator,
Taro Industry SA, Romania*

«I like the result of work, namely the transformation of the raw material, from a less agreeable product to the **spectacular**, pleasant and very useful finished product»

*Adorian-Ovidiu Inasel,
Trainee, A&A Vesa SRL,
Romania*

«**Quality** is my passion»

*Mirella Molnár,
Production operator,
Eagle Ottawa*



«**Curiosity**, perseverance, a sense of relation-building, the investment and the **passion** for the material are indispensable assets to succeed in the fascinating world of leather»

*Charly Louvel,
Operation supervisor,
HCP-Gordon Choisy, France*



«There's a lot of **science** that goes into leather»

*Brian Duncan
Pre-finish supervisor,
Scottish Leather Group,
UK*

«It's very fulfilling to think that the leather I produce might fit an Airbus or a **luxury** hotel in Dubai»

*Kai Frädrieh, Lab technician,
Gmelich & Sohne GmbH,
Germany*



«**Respect of the material** is at the heart of tanning»

*Roxane Cannamela,
Quality supervisor,
Tanneries Dupire, France*



«There is **no day alike!**»

*César Rosa,
Sales assistant, Curtumes
Iberia, Portugal*



The leather industry is a truly global industry, embracing craftsmanship, technology, science, creativity and design. Leather continues to be a highly desirable product, in demand not only in everyday products but also for technical applications and indulgence within luxury brands.

For those interested in a career covering technology, science, fashion or design, the leather sector offers an exciting range of careers options, with opportunities to work with prestige brands in different countries around the globe. Leather remains a key ingredient within many sectors, including footwear, fashion, accessories and automotive, and new recruits are being sought at all levels.

Working in the leather sector is not just about making leather or leather products. Understanding both the quality and performance of leather used is critical to the value of the final product. Many companies, from the prestigious brands like Louis Vuitton, Prada and Aston Martin, to the everyday household names, such as Clarkes Shoes, H&M and Berghaus, rely on talented leather professionals to ensure that the leather in their products is as beautiful and functional as their customers would expect.

The breadth of the industry means that there are opportunities for all, from apprenticeships through to Post-Doctoral Study, from the vocational to the purely academic. The industry needs engineers, chemists, technicians, sales, marketing and management staff, as well as designers and artisans. It is an industry with something for everyone.

**Calum Bryan – Apprentice
Scottish Leather Group
Bride of Weir, Scotland**



Calum gained his apprenticeship with Scottish Leather Group after responding to an advert at his local job centre. He left school with a number of qualifications but chose not to go to university as he wanted something more hands-on, with responsibility and that would be a stepping stone to a career.

Throughout his apprenticeship, he has enjoyed the responsibility he has been given and being treated, not as an apprentice, but as part of the team. Calum says that he is proud of his job and happy to say he makes leather. He has also recommended the apprenticeship to his friends. As he says, "I enjoy waking up for work".

"Being a student at the University of Northampton has not only been a fantastic experience but has rapidly created career opportunities. The knowledge and personal skills I have gained, led me to a successful internship at Aston Martin Lagonda and they have since offered me employment."

**Gunnar Barth
BSc (Hons) Leather Technology 2015
Leather Technologist and Materials Development,
Body Engineering**



Project partners & supporters:

COTANCE; industriAll-European Trade Union; UK Leather Federation; ACEXPIEL; Fédération Française de la Tannerie-Mégisserie; Verband der Deutschen Lederindustrie; Associação Portuguesa dos Industriais de Curtumes; Asociația Producătorilor de Piele și Blana din România; Bulgarian Branch Union of Leather, Furriers, Footwear and Haberdashery Industries; Textile, Habillement, Cuir, Blanchisserie-CGT; UGT - FICA ; Confpeltex; Trade Union of Mine-, Energy- and Industry Workers (BDSZ).

Participating tanneries:

Bader GmbH, Charles F Stead & Co Ltd, Curtidos Badia, Curtidos Riba Guixá, Curtumes Boaventura Lda, Curtumes Iberia SA, Dermys Louro SA, Eagle Ottawa, Gmelich + Söhne GmbH, Institute of Creative Leather Technology, HCP-Gordon Choisy, Heller-Leder GmbH, Hutchings and Harding, Jacob Prod Com SRL, INDUCOL SA, Miret y Cia, Pielorex SA, Pittards Leather, Scottish Leather Group, Sudleder GmbH, Tanneries Bodin-Joyeux, Tanneries Carriat, Tanneries Dupire, Tanneries Roux, Taro Industry SA, Tehnomat Merkurij, A&A Vesa SRL.

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

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