

PRESS RELEASE

Liking leather...

There is nothing quite as luxurious as a genuine leather lounge suite – the texture, rich aesthetic and luxurious feel of leather is unsurpassed when it comes to upholstery options. Claire Gibson from leading furniture manufacturer, La-Z-Boy, offers some tips and advice on how to best care for your prized leather furniture.

10 October 2017, Johannesburg: Leather is a natural product – it breathes, it's warm and each hide is unique in that it boasts unique individual characteristics. It displays traces of its natural origin in the form of brands, scars and creases – and it is these unique hallmarks that add character to any furniture upholstered in genuine leather. Aside from its gorgeous aesthetics, and inviting tactile appeal, leather is also highly durable and hard-wearing, and as it ages, its natural patina increases its overall appeal.

However, all these benefits come with a comparatively high price tag, says Claire Gibson from leading furniture manufacturer, La-Z-Boy: “Although furniture with genuine leather upholstery is usually priced on the upper end of the spectrum, there is good reason why. It is by far the most luxurious of upholstery options, it looks good for years, it is comfortable, resilient, and it is comparatively easy to care for.”

Different types of leather

Claire notes that when selecting furniture with leather upholstery, it is vital to understand the various different types of leather on the market. She provides the following breakdown of some of the most popular types:

- **Aniline and sauvage leather:** At the higher-end of the spectrum, this leather is made from carefully selected high quality hides. Dyes are impregnated into the skin and the surface remains natural, with little or no protection. Minor imperfections and variations of shade can be clearly seen. Aniline leather will inevitably become soiled in use.
- **Semi Aniline leather:** This leather combines the natural beauty inherent in Aniline leather, with a good level of protection as well. Good quality skins are impregnated with dye, and a light protective coating is applied to offer some resistance to staining.
- **Pigmented leather:** A layer of pigment covers most of the natural imperfections on the hide, the leather-like grain is then embossed onto the skin, and a protective coat is applied over the pigment. This offers excellent wear characteristics, excellent light resistance, a uniform colour, and it is particularly easy to care for.
- **Nubuck leather:** This type of leather is dyed and its surface is buffed to provide a soft velvety feel that is smoother than suede. This kind of leather is not recommended for family use, as it is particularly delicate and prone to staining.

- **Bycast leather:** This leather is made from the lower split, or suede, which is built up with a deep, artificial surface coating. The shiny surface can be damaged by stretching, and it also scratches quite easily. The one benefit is that it is much more affordable than the other kinds of leather.
- **Faux leather:** If you have your heart set on a leather couch, but it is just not in your price range, then you can consider faux leather upholstery. Gone are the days of hideous imitation leathers – today, technology allows the production of faux fabric leather lookalikes that look exactly like the genuine thing – from a visual and a tactile point of view, it can be really difficult to tell them apart. The downside is that it is not as durable as genuine leather, but it does come in at a much more affordable price point.

Caring for your leather sofa

Gorgeous leather seating is a luxurious investment – one that will last a lifetime if you take care of it properly, says Claire: “Good quality leather upholstery will only get better with age if you take the time to care for it.” She provides the following care tips for your leather chairs and sofas:

- **Assess the quality of the leather:** It is imperative to understand what type of leather has been used to cover your sofa, as they each require their own special treatment. For example, Aniline and Semi Aniline leather responds very well to waxes – it is easily applied by hand and helps the leather develop a rich patina over time. Nubuck and pigmented leather on the other hand, require completely different treatments to keep them looking good. The best option is to speak to the sales person in store and ask them for some recommendations.
- **Consider the layout of the room:** If your leather couch is exposed to extreme temperatures and a lack of moisture, it will end up developing cracks. As such, it is not a good idea to place your leather sofa next to a heater, fireplace, radiator or air-conditioning unit. UV rays can also affect the leather badly, so be sure to keep it positioned out of direct sunlight.
- **Pets can be a problem:** Cats will often use your leather couch as a (very expensive) scratching post, while dogs can often chew away at the leather. This is a very common problem, so be sure to keep your pets away from your leather sofas as much as possible. Also, remember that the reason lots of pets develop these horrible habits is due to boredom, lack of exercise or nervousness. As such, invest in a proper scratching post for your cat, and take your dog for walks as often as possible.
- **Hygiene, moisturising and plumping out:** At the end of the day, leather is a skin, and just like you are trained to take care of your skin, you should offer a similar treatment to leather upholstery. Ensure that it is kept clean – use a soft dry cloth to wipe away any dirt or grime, and vacuum underneath the cushions every week. You also need to moisturise it with a purpose-made serum, wax or cream in order to keep it subtle, soft and beautiful. If you are trying out a new treatment, always be sure to try it out on a small area that is out of sight. If it works out well, only then should you apply it to the entire sofa. Lastly, if the cushions can be turned,

be sure to turn them weekly, to ensure an even distribution of wear and tear

- **Call in the pros:** If your leather sofa has a large cut, tear, stain or abrasion, then it is advisable to call in a professional to help you deal with it – they will repair the damages by mixing the right colours, and applying heat to achieve the right texture.

Browse La-Z-Boy's stunning range of genuine leather recliners, sofas and lounge suites by visiting: www.la-z-boy.co.za.

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