



CREDIT: PREMIERE VISION LEATHER

Practically all the leather in the world comes from animals raised for meat: cows, sheep, pigs and goats. There are exceptions and some of them make the industry substantially more colourful.

Out of the ordinary

Brazil has a large cattle herd, as everyone knows. In 2013, the national herd size was 193 million head and the slaughter rate was 42 million in the year. Projections suggest slaughter will go up to 52 million by 2020, so Brazilian bovine hides are in plentiful supply. Leandro Jose Scur, who runs the Tre Anytry tannery, prefers less readily available material.

Based in Novo Hamburgo, a world-renowned centre for bovine leather production, and operating in the shadow of the city's Feevale University, which carries out important research into technology developments in bovine leather manufacture, Tre Anytry is a small tannery that has made exotic leather its forte. Surrounded by skins, Mr Scur sources snake, lizard, crocodile, ostrich

and fish skins to tan instead, 80% of them from outside Brazil.

He explains that his preferred way of working is for a partner in the country of origin to process the skins to pickle or wet blue stage before shipping them to Rio Grande do Sul. His first step is to take them to crust and then to wait for orders before proceeding to turn them into finished leather. "This allows me to respond to customers more quickly," he says. Each skin comes labelled with a tracking number, which Tre Anytry passes on to the buyers of its leathers (typically high-end makers of unusual accessories, footwear and garments), to make sure production of the tannery's brightly coloured range of articles remains completely in keeping with conservation. "Each skin has its own

passport," the Tre Anytry owner says, "showing all the information: where it comes from, when it arrived in Brazil and so on."

This touches on another point. It's not just that this material is hard to find compared to Brazilian cattle hides, it also takes a long time to reach Mr Scur. "The lead-time is four months, minimum," he says without hesitation, almost as though he enjoys the constant challenges of having such a complex supply chain. "My suppliers have to find the skins and then wait weeks for the necessary permits from the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Then I have to wait weeks for a separate licence to import the skins. Then they have to reach us."



Leandro Scur believes older machines, like this 60-year-old Svit embossing machine that he restored himself, are well suited to tanning exotic skins.

CREDIT: WTP

It's all a bit unpredictable, so some months Tre Anytry's output is as low as 1,000 square-metres of finished leather, while for others it might swell to 10,000. "That's the luxury market for you," Mr Scur continues. "It's up and down like a roller-coaster. It's good. You get a lot of adrenalin from it." He says this as he shows off a python skin that is 7.1 metres in length (his record is 8.5 metres).

As well as sticking strictly to the rules that surround exotic skins, Leandro Scur has made Tre Anytry's tanning operations as sustainable as possible. His drying chamber is an in-house invention, developed from an old shipping container. All the water the production process uses comes from rain and from Mr Scur's own underground aquifer. He recycles every drop of water he can and is proud of the fact that he is not reliant on Novo Hamburgo's municipal supply. In fact, he insists that as long as some rain falls every three months, he can get by without using any of the city's water.

Another impressive element of the tannery's sustainability strategy is the love with which Mr Scur has restored several old machines and returned them to active service. These include a beautiful 60-year-old Svit embossing machine, a 50-year-old wooden Vallero drum and a still-working Rino Ficini polishing machine that bears a label saying quite clearly that it was made in Santa Croce in Italy in 1878. He believes old machines are particularly well suited to processing exotic skins.

Leandro Scur believes demand for exotic leather is strong and that it's an area of the leather sector that can continue to thrive, especially if production takes place in keeping with what he calls "the modern idea" of making sure the leather industry provides a financial return for the people who live close to the snakes, crocodiles and other animals that provide people with meat and skins. 🌱



A seven metre python skin at Tre Anytry.

CREDIT: BILL AMBERG STUDIO



Leandro Scur of Tre Anytry (right) showing some of his finished snakeskins to London-based designer Bill Amberg on a visit arranged by Brazilian tanning industry association CICB in August 2014.

CREDIT: CICB