

## How might patina effect my leather bag?

Written by Chris Repp

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Patina is the sheen on any surface produced by age and use. Many different kinds of leather will patina. Darkening, shining and scratches are all common signs of leather patina.

In this article I'd like to help you look ahead to how and why your leather bag may patina over the years you own it. The leather finishes I describe and bag photos shown have been provided by [Saddleback Leather Company](#).

Most people find leather patina cool. It's like the distressing of a bomber jacket or the breaking in of a fine leather chair. Because patina develops in response to your environment, it will make your leather bag a one of a kind.

Others prefer their leather to look like the day they bought it for as long as possible.

Part 1 of this article will teach you about which leathers will develop a patina and why. Part 2 will share some tips on how you can slow down, or speed up the process of your leather bag developing a patina.

# Part 1: How and why will different leather finishes develop a patina?

Three factors cause leather to develop a patina;

- when the fibers change as they absorb oil and other liquids over time
- when the surface is buffed, scraped or rubbed repeatedly
- when the leather is exposed sunlight, heat and humidity

Because leather can be finished in very different ways, the finishing process is the greatest factor in deciding the level and type of patina a bag will show.

For this article I will discuss 4 leather finishes and how how patina effects each. They are finished leather, semi-aniline leather and two types of pull-up leathers.

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## Finished Leather (Carbon Black in Saddleback)

Finished leather will show very little patina over time.

The sprayed on color and topcoat of finished leather protect the leather fibers beneath from absorbing liquids. The color and clearcoat also limit scratching and sheen changes to this leather.

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Effects of patina: If you like your leather bag to look like new as long as possible choose finished leather. Finished leather will patina very little over time.



# Shiny Pull-up Leather (Chestnut in Saddleback)

Shiny pull-up leather will patina some over time.

The wax or oil that is applied, or &quot;stuffed&quot;, into the leather provides some protection for the leather fibers from absorbing oil and other liquids. However, if a liquid sit on the surface of the leather for a long time it will absorb into the leather

fibers. This may evaporate away or may stain the fibers darker depending on the type of liquid.

Over time the surface can distress due to rubbing, scratches and fading. Once the surface wax or oil is gone the fibers are exposed and the leather will then absorb liquids and may darken. So, re-waxing this leather will slow the effects of patina.

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Effects of patina: If you'd like to be able to control some of the effects of patina on your leather bag, choose pull-up leather. Shiny pull-up leather will show medium levels of **darker** and lighter patina over time.



# **Pull-up Leather Matte (Dark Coffe Brown in Saddleback)**

Matte pull-up leather will also patina some over time.

The same waxes and oils are stuffed into this leather to create a dark initial finish that will lighten significantly when



stretched, scraped and scuffed.

Because of the dark, matte finish on this leather, liquid spills will not show or create patina as quickly as the chestnut pull-up leather.

Rubs and scrapes will show lighter distress areas on the leather.

Effects of patina: Again, if you like some control over the effects of patina on your leather bag, choose pull-up leather. Dark matte pull-up leather will show medium levels of **lighter** patina over time.



# **Semi-Aniline Leather (Tobacco Brown from Saddleback)**

Semi-aniline and  
aniline leather will

show the most patina  
of any leather finish  
over time.

This leather is  
usually dyed to a  
color but then little  
or no finish is

applied to the surface of the leather. Therefore, the fibers are exposed and will absorb liquids, change color with exposure the sun and lighten when

scratched or  
scraped.

The darkening and  
lightening that  
occur to this  
leather make it a

great choice for  
those who like  
leather that  
becomes unique  
and distressed  
looking over time.

Effects of patina:  
If you appreciate  
leather with a  
patina and want  
your bag to look  
distressed and



unique, choose a  
semi-aniline  
leather.

Semi-aniline  
leather will patina  
significantly over  
time in most  
cases.

# Part 2: How can you effect the

# patina of your leather bag?

It is possible to  
control the level  
to which your

leather will show a patina. Here are a few ways you can either slow down or speed up the development of patina on your

# leather bag.

# If you like

**patina you  
can speed it  
up.**

**Do you want**

your leather  
bag to look  
darkened,  
distressed and  
uniquely yours  
very quickly?

First, choose  
an aniline or  
pull-up leather  
which will  
naturally



change easily.

Second, apply  
a good leather

conditioning oil  
to darken the  
fibers of your  
leather and  
give it a darker  
patina.  
Warming the

leather with a hair dryer or in a warm oven will darken the bag even further. [See the article](#)

Conditioning  
your leather  
bag to learn  
more about  
which  
conditioning  
oils you can

use to change  
and protect  
your leather.

Finally, use the

bag lots. A  
well  
constructed  
leather bag, like  
from  
Saddleback  
, will withstand

the rigors of  
daily use even  
as the leather  
itself develops  
a unique  
patina.

**If you like  
the look of  
new leather  
you can slow  
patina.**



If you prefer  
your leather  
bag to look  
like new  
longer, you  
can take

# steps to slow the development of patina.

First, choose  
a more finish  
protected  
leather that  
will not  
absorb liquids

or change  
easily.

Also, you can  
spray or rub a

clear  
protective  
coating onto  
your leather  
to keep soil  
and liquids

from  
absorbing into  
the leather  
fibers.

Finally, you  
should clean  
and condition  
the leather  
regularly so it  
is free from

dirt and  
grime.



I'm one who  
thinks leather  
with a patina  
is cool. I'd

love to see  
your leather  
bag or jacket  
that has  
developed a  
unique

patina. Send  
me pix to  
chris@leather  
help.com Let  
me know if I  
can post em

in this article  
for others to  
see as well.

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