



SUSTAINABLE leather-work *Marai*

Changing the face of leather, Marai make the most of what nature has to offer with a circular philosophy that combats throwaway culture

What is Marai?

Marai is a young brand from Switzerland that designs elegant, high-quality bags and accessories made from sustainable leather.

How did it all begin?

Tens of thousands of goat and sheepskins from the food industry are burned every year in Switzerland. Instead of utilising these local resources, hides are flown in from overseas – simply because they are cheaper. But it didn't make sense to us to be so incredibly wasteful. We believe that in a world where resources are becoming increasingly scarce, it is important to use these natural and circular materials from our local regions.

Leather production often faces criticism, how do you do things differently?

Leather and its production are often criticised – and not without good reason. The production of leather happens often at the expense of people and the environment, and a lot of heavy chemicals are often involved. However, a lot has changed in the last few years and many companies are working in line with nature, reducing the amount of chemicals they use and are recycling water. On the other hand, there's a lot of misinformation spread by the media and radical animal rights group claiming that cattle, sheep and goats are kept for leather production – which is absolutely wrong. 99% of the animals whose hides are processed into leather come from meat or milk production. The hides of these animals can either be discarded or used as a resource to produce a long-lasting, circular material. At Marai we manage the entire supply chain, from rawhide to the finished product. This is made possible as we've ensured that our supply chain is very local.

Where do the hides you use come from?

The hides we use come from goats in Switzerland. They are native to the hilly regions where they are also used for landscape maintenance. We collect the hides from various farmers and local butchers. Our goat hides are processed into leather in southern Germany using only plant extracts from different types of wood, bark, and tree fruits – all of which are renewable raw materials. We make sure to preserve the leather in its purest form – instead of covering up natural features with a coating, we celebrate the individuality of each piece. Small traces of nature remain visible, making each piece we make truly one of a kind.

What advice do you have for brands looking to be more conscious?

It is always best to take a very critical look at all of your processes and try to optimise them. Very often it is not enough to simply replace a material with a more responsibly produced one, but it is essential to rethink the whole way of doing things, even the business model. The future is local, soil-to-soil, transparent – and small- scale.

marai.ch

"SUSTAINABILITY IS NEITHER A TREND NOR AN OPTION – IT IS A MUST"

