

Joao Carvalho tells us about

Leathers embracing art and technique

He approached the world of tanning when he was a child. Yet, at the same time he was living in an artistic contest. Of course Joao Carvalho is a personality in the leather world right because he loves this material, he knows how to work it, process it, make it fashionable, with his inborn artistic and creative inclination. "I have always lived with these two different worlds in my family – Carvalho says -: I inherited the artistic inclination from my mother and from my maternal grandfather, knowledge and love for leather come from my father and from my paternal grandfather." In 1983 he left for Germany to expand his technical-tanning knowledge; he graduated at Reutlingen institute and for a certain time he worked in Portugal for his family's tanneries; then he decided to start up his own career and, at the same time, to set free his artistic inclination. "I need-



ed to parallel myself with the market by proposing something absolutely personal and eclectic in a sector that has huge potentialities." Carvalho was one of the first to develop the theme of transfer papers analyzing results and experiences in the textile sector, and adapting them to the tanning sector. So he settled closer and closer collaborations with exclusive Italian partners, who found interesting potentialities in this technology. Carvalho thinks that transfer paper is a path you can't go back: "This technology enables you to impress a character to leather, and upgrades even leathers that belong to lower quality ranges. I have never stopped my commitment because research is my lifeblood: papers, plates, finishing and cutting methods exalt creativity on leather, a natural product

that can't be standardized, and therefore unique". The Research Centre is located in Gouxaria, Portugal; it's a melting pot of ideas and applications where 5 people work under Joao Carvalho's supervision to find new ideas and to develop new technical applications for leather processing. The Centre works in close collaboration with tanners, footwear manufacturers, bag and accessory manufacturers where leather is always present, and Italian, Spanish, Chinese and Indian design offices.



cess. You can achieve exclusive results provided that all leather transformation is based on unique techniques, often patented by our Centre – he explains -. Our goal is the industrialization of ideas, everywhere, to turn them into real and marketable products. I often work with customers also as a consultant, trying to find solutions for product development even in exclusive conditions. Moreover we produce a trend book, which is the result of our harmonized research that is renewed season after season."

"Innovation is the keyword in every pro- And what about the artistic inclination



inherited from the mother's side? Joao Carvalho is proud to show us some pictures contained in an elegant catalogue: "Leather has been a constant presence in my life, so I have developed my own artistic inclination with this material. Leather is the essential material of my sculptures, which capture and fix the model's image in a tridimensional development, expressing the artistic inspiration of the moment. Leather becomes an invisible mantel that covers and protects the body, and takes it into an eternal dimension." And emphasizing this boundless vision of leather, he concludes: "I can't live without leather!" ■

