

IGUALADA,  
EUROPEAN CAPITAL  
OF QUALITY LEATHER



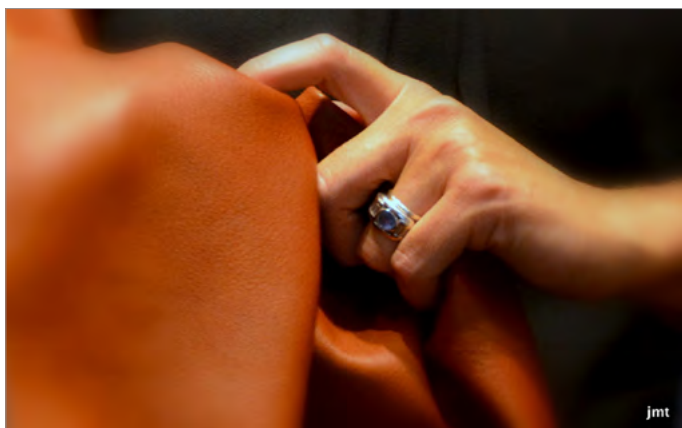
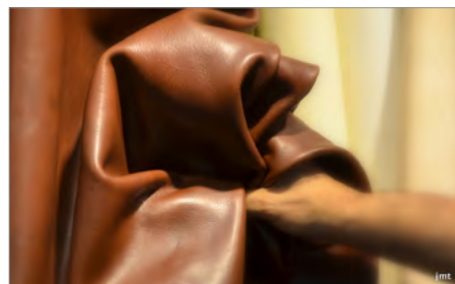
Ajuntament  d'Igualada

# IGUALADA, EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF QUALITY LEATHER

At a time of disorientation caused by the economic crisis, the town of Igualada needs interesting and achievable projects, challenges that serve as an economic revolution to help them to recover their confidence in the town's potential.

**"Igualada, European capital of quality leather"** is a realistic project that can be assumed in the short and medium term and which will project Igualada internationally, revitalize the most important and historical industry of the town, strengthen the town's wager on innovation and allow business and talent to be brought in. It is a project linked to the university world and also the first step in restoring the el Rec district.

The project led by Igualada Town Hall has all the ingredients to be a successful project: it combines enterprise, university, innovation, wealth and tourism, and inherently bears Igualada's international projection. It is a project which not only has to serve to recover the citizens' damaged self-esteem, but also to strengthen the institutions' leadership in the territory.



# Seven centuries of history

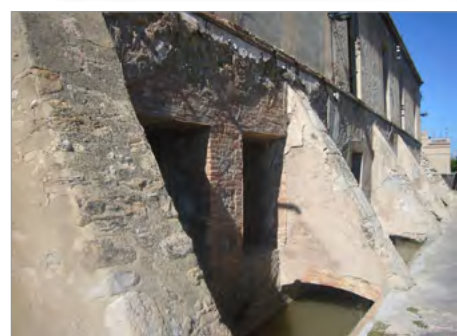
The history of Igualada would be impossible to explain without the tanners. The leather tanning industry has been one of the principal motors of progress and development in the town. The tanners' determination and adaptation to the changes in society throughout the centuries is the history of the effort and adaptation of the people of Igualada who have woven the history of the town biography after biography, generation after generation.

The Rec d'Igualada irrigation channel is three thousand metres long and takes the water from a reservoir there is on the river Anoia. Up to now it had been believed that the tanning industries had been located in the town centre and moved to the irrigation area after the 18th century. However, modern historians deny this and provide documents that show that it was already there as early as the 13th century. In the later 18th century and early 19th, when the tanners of Igualada came out of the shelter of the medieval walls, they built the new tanning industries on the edge of the Rec in order to use the waters. The characteristic buttresses on the façades of the tanning industries remain, identifying the district along with the typical walkway entrances, the tanks, the picks and the gates.

The town's patron saint, St Bartholomew, was proposed by the tanners for his martyrdom and the patron saint of tanners, St Anthony, has an altar in the Basilica of Santa Maria with the representation of the tools of the trade.

Igualada's leather is a trait of identity, the symbol of the territory. It is what best defines the town and distinguishes it from all others. A motor of business and tourist attraction that must be enhanced.

"Igualada's leather is a trade of identity, what best defines the town"



# Leather Museum of Igualada and Anoia Regional Museum

The Leather Museum of Igualada and Anoia Regional Museum attracted 50,000 visitors in 2011, which makes it one of the town's principal cultural attractions and shows that the Rec district is once more a meeting place for the townspeople and visitors.

The Leather Museum of Igualada and Anoia Regional Museum forms part of the Catalonia Museum of Science and Technique and is located in two emblematic buildings:

-Cal Boyer

-Cal Granotes

“With 50,000 visitors a year, Cal Boyer and Cal Granotes are one of the town's principal cultural attractions”



# Cal Boyer

Cal Boyer is a former 19th-century cotton factory which now houses Igualada Leather Museum where we can tour the world of leather in the exhibition: leather in history, the production, utility and cultural significance of leather on our Mediterranean civilisation and the universe of leather that shows us the diversity of its uses and utilities.

The visit and workshops focused on leather and the tanning industries are performed with permanent displays such as “La pell en la història” (Leather in history), “Un univers de pell” (A universe of leather) and “La industrialització de l’adob: dels clots als bombos” (Tanning industrialisation: from basins to drums).

Open to the public too is the L’Home i l’Aigua (Man and Water) section which is intended to give a view of different aspects of the world of water related to our society: What is water? Water on Earth, innovation, transport and distribution, water in the home, water and health and its economic use.



# Cal Granotes

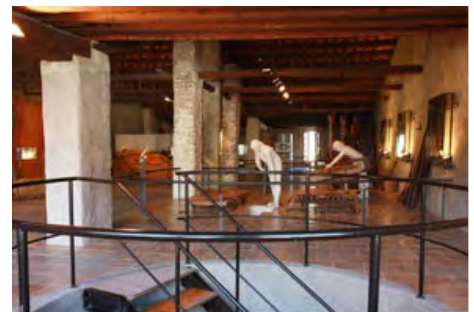
Cal Granotes is an 18th century industrial construction that preserves the two typical plants of a tanning industry: the beam house and the hanger.

This is the only tanning industry turned into a museum in Catalonia and symbolises the most singular activity of Igualada, the transformation of raw skin into leather: tanning. Using an interesting staging of the trade and its tools, the craft process used before industrialisation is explained.

Three areas make up the exhibition of the Leather Museum:

- Leather in history and its cultural significance for the Mediterranean civilisation.
- A universe of leather that shows us the diversity of its uses and utilities.
- The industrialisation of tanning: from basins to drums, where machinery is used to explain the technical evolution of leather production until mechanisation.

This former tanning industry offers staged visits by “Xatet de Cal Granotes”. Using theatre as a teaching tool, an actor in the role of a master tanner leads the visit and explains the secrets and anecdotes of the work of tanning skins and the daily work in these industries.



# Igualada leather today

Igualada is the town of the Spanish state with most tanning industries. Today it has almost 30 companies engaged in this activity. It is the town's strongest industrial sector with a turnover of 170 million euros a year and which employs 1,200 people between direct jobs (over 800) and indirect (over 300). Igualada's tanning companies export around the world, 70% of their products are sent to Europe, America and Asia.

Over the years, Igualada has positioned itself as a leader in quality leather production. In recent years, the companies have overcome the environmental problems and have turned their production towards quality to consolidate themselves on the world market.

The mechanisation of the processes, the quality control and very demanding audits have resulted in a faultless leather allowing the production of exclusive products.

This is why the most important international and national luxury brands such as Armani, Christian Dior, Hermès, Louis Vuitton, Prada, Gucci, Versace and Loewe buy a large part of their leather in Igualada to make their exclusive fashion accessories, which demonstrates that leather from Igualada is considered a world benchmark of quality.

Although it is the industry that first noted the severe crisis (as early as the 80s and 90s) the leather sector is now recovering and growing and the companies have managed to take advantage of this recovery by focusing on innovation and a generational takeover that has been decisive in achieving this international opening. Small and medium-sized family companies have evolved generation after generation from a craft system to a high level of specialisation which has placed Igualada's tanning industry on the world front line even though it has to compete with countries with much lower production costs.

The tanners of Igualada have managed to adapt to the process mechanisation and have considerably increased both production and the diversity of their products, taking

"Igualada's tanning companies export around the world, working from the best international brands and are leaders in quality leather"



quality as their mainstay and maintaining scrupulous respect for the environment.

The tanners of Igualada are not only a benchmark for the quality of their leather, but also for the small environmental impact of their industry. The large investment in research and development, in the application of clean technologies, in the purification of waters and waste, along with the drive given to the Higher School of Tanning and a great effort made by the tanners of Igualada to specialise and recycle their industries to be able to offer the largest possible range of high-quality leather articles are factors which explain why today Igualada is considered the world capital of leather.

“Igualada’s tanners are also a benchmark for their industry’s small environmental impact. They have applied clean technologies and innovated in water purification”



# Igualada, European capital of quality leather

The “Igualada, European capital of quality leather” project conceived and led by Igualada Town Hall is a project which seeks to consecrate Igualada as an international benchmark of quality leather and which integrates six fundamental pillars.

1-J BELLA CLUSTER CLUB

2-EEI-UPC SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

3-CÀTEDRA A3 LEATHER INNOVATION

4-LEATHER CRAFT TRAINING CYCLE

5-WASTE WATER PURIFIER

6-LEATHER INNOVATION PARK IGUALADA-JORBA



## 1- J BELLA CLUSTER CLUB

### J Bella European Interpretation Centre of Quality Leather in Tanning

La Bella, a former tanning industry from 1913 at number 23 carrer del Rec, on the corner with carrer Joan Mercader, will house the J Bella Cluster Club, a European interpretation centre for quality leather. The "Bella" lies in a strategic position in the centre of the Rec district alongside cal Boyer (Leather Museum) and Cal Granotes.

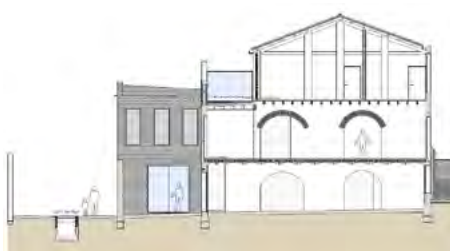
The premises has a surface area of 224m<sup>2</sup> and the building, which Igualada Town Hall intends to rehabilitate, has a constructed area of 532m<sup>2</sup> distributed over 3 floors.

The first floor is intended for a Cluster Club, an elegant and customised bar with an outdoor terrace to give life to the town and the district, which will operate under concession. A leather showroom is planned for the second floor and an interpretation area of the Rec district on the third.

The Bella Tanning Industry must be a meeting place for the sector that facilitates networking and business meetings, and at the same time a cultural area open to the town which allows reminds us through experience of the origins of the tanning sector.

The building will be an architectural jewel that will attract people both from Igualada itself and visitors from elsewhere, will project the tanning sector and the town of Igualada and will serve as an example of the district's potential.

According to the schedule, the Adoberia Bella will be ready by the end of 2014.



## 2- EEI-UPC SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

The Government of Catalonia has given the green light to the new UPC-Igualada Campus to replace the town's present school of engineering (la Teneria) and will enable the studies now given on leather tanning to be extended.

The future EEI-UPC School of Engineering will be located in the new Pla de la Massa building alongside the AllCA technological centre.

The project receives 2.5 million from the Government of Catalonia in addition to the 2.5 invested by the Town Hall. The new campus will have synergies with the 30 companies of Igualada engaged in tanning leather.

In the executive project of the new university campus building the volume has been reduced, as it will use the facilities of the present AllCA tanning research centre and all of its technical material, which has been purchased by Igualada Town Hall.

In September 2012 the agreement was signed between the Government of Catalonia, the Town Hall and the UPC, and work could begin on the new Pla de la Massa building in 2013. It is expected to be ready to start by September 2014.



### 3- CÀTEDRA A3 LEATHER INNOVATION

The A3 Leather Innovation Chair is intended to attract the principal leather fashion firms and to research into new tanning treatment technologies.

It has been created through an agreement between Igualada Town Hall, the Igualada Technical School Consortium (CETI), the Association for Research into Tanning and Annexe Industries (AIICA) and the Spanish Chemical Association of the Leather Industry, under the umbrella of the Catalonia Polytechnic University (UPC).

The chair enables all of these organisations to work together to increase the technological level and knowledge of the tanning sector in accordance with the needs of companies. Furthermore, thanks to the AIICA technology centre, the latest innovations are constantly brought into the training programme. The centre will also help companies create innovative products to make the sector more competitive and more environmentally friendly.

The Càtedra A3 Leather Innovation is already running six projects and is training designers of the most prestigious fashion brands. In just 6 months, it has carried out 2,500 acts related to companies.



Leather Innovation  
Càtedra A<sup>3</sup> UPC



ESCOLA D'ENGINYERIA D'IGUALADA  
UNIVERSITAT POLITÈCNICA DE CATALUNYA



Ajuntament d'Igualada



**AIICA**

Centre Tecnològic



**aqeic**



## 4- MEDIUM GRADE TRAINING CYCLE IN LEATHER CRAFT

The Gaspar Camps Municipal School of Art of Igualada has always offered leather workshops and artistic studios, and since 1997 is the only school in Catalonia to give the Medium Grade Training Cycle in Leather Craft, with the official title of Tècnic d'Arts Plàstiques i Disseny en Artesania en Cuir (Technician in Plastic Arts and Design in Leather Craft).

This Medium Grade Training Cycle in Leather Craft is the town's principal asset in the area of leatherwork and an investment of the municipal government for the next year.

The Gaspar Camps Municipal School of Art of Igualada was created in 1983 and gives official studies and qualifications officially recognised by the Ministry of Education of the Government of Catalonia.



## 5- WASTE WATER PURIFIER

The waste water purifier is a key element for this project to go ahead, for without it any idea to enhance the leather sector would be unfeasible.

In 2005 the tanners of Igualada created the company Igualadina de Depuració i Recuperació S.L (IDR) which was commissioned with building and managing the water purifying plant on the Ronda del Rec in Igualada. This facility, one of the most modern in Europe, made the tanners pioneers in bringing in new ecological solutions for purifying untreated waters.

The waste water purifier each day receives 11,000m<sup>3</sup> of water and generates annual costs of 4 and a half million euros. Up to now the purifying plant had processed the waste water from the leather tanning industries and part of the urban waters of the municipalities of Igualada and Santa Margarida de Montbui, which were needed to dilute the polluting load of industrial waste. Thanks to a new uptake system, most of the open waters continue along the gulley leading them directly to the purifying plant in Vilanova del Camí, a plant managed by the Catalan Water Agency.

The Igualada purifying plant, known as the “Depuradora dels adobers” (Tanners’ purifier) has made these and industry more competitive and ecological and has helped to improve the quality of the water from the river Anoia.



## 6. LEATHER INNOVATION PARK IGUALADA - JORBA

For months, Igualada Town Hall has worked shoulder to shoulder with Jorba Town Hall and the tanners to deal with moving and concentrating the tanning industries on an industrial estate near the future EEI-UPC School of Engineering and well connected to the purifier.

This move will be advantageous for the town and especially for the industries themselves, which will be able to work under conditions with modern facilities and easy access for goods transport.

The Igualada Leather Cluster Industrial Estate will represent an important leap forward in concentrating the economic, technological and academic activity related to the tanning sector.



## PRESENCE AT INTERNATIONAL FAIRS:

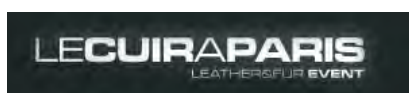
### INTERNATIONAL IGUALADA LEATHER CLUSTER BARCELONA

The presence at the most important international fairs of the sector with the name of "Igalada Leather Cluster (Barcelona)" is an essential part of the project.

By being present at the most prestigious fairs, the Igalada brands strengthened their good name as leaders in quality leather and their contact with customers, and will project the name of the town of Igalada internationally.

Apart from the stands that each company from Igalada might have at the most important fairs, we suggest that Igalada should have its own stand to promote and present the town's equipment and know-how in leather. The Asiatic fair will also be useful for consolidating the binomial of Igalada and the Barcelona brand.

For 2014 work is under way to be present at:



Le Cuir à Paris, París.



APLF (Asia Pacific Leather Fair). Xina, Shangai



LINEAPELLE, Bolonya.

