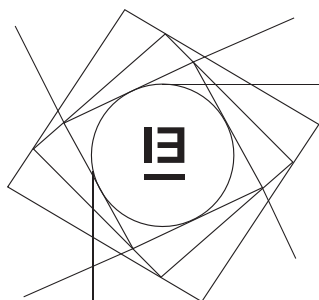




STORIES / LIFESTYLE

LEATHER & LEGACY

BELT & BAND founder Jacques Lombard discusses his craft, his passion for leather, and how this artisanal brand is fast becoming a LUXURY GO-TO.

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“IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A DREAM OF MINE to do leather work as a full-time passion,” says Belt & Band founder Jacques Lombard. He started working with leather in high school, making gifts for friends and family, and eventually producing leather belts for the groomsmen at his wedding. What started as a hobby grew into an authentic family business that has collaborated with international brands such as FELCO and David Collins Studio (London).

✕ THE BEGINNING In 2016, Jacques supplied watch straps to a local watch shop in Cape Town. “There were more orders for straps than anything else, and I saw that as a niche that I could focus on,” he says. At the time, he was working as a property broker; making straps was an innovative way to earn extra cash.

As the business gradually grew, he decided to pursue his artisanal work full time. “It was my family and friends

Nguni-pattern Alpaca-wool laptop pouch. Each backpack takes more than 120 hours to manufacture.

His third sub-brand, called Co.VENANT, focuses on general leather goods and ready-made stock, which can be found at a dedicated brick-and-mortar store in Wellington in the Western Cape. “We feel that the separation of these three brands is important for the future growth of the business,” Jacques says.

✕ TECHNIQUE, PROCESS AND MATERIAL

Jacques uses vegetable-tanned leather in all his creations – a material that is natural, durable and environmentally friendly. In addition to ageing with a unique and beautiful patina, the qualities of this leather allow for easier shaping and moulding. Unlike the more commonly used chromium-tanned leather – which is susceptible to rips and cracks as it ages – the vegetable-tanned equivalent can be passed down through generations without losing quality.

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who encouraged me to take a leap of faith and make this my career,” he explains.

✕ THE INSPIRATION The name Belt & Band neatly alludes to Jacques’s two passions: working with leather (making belts, straps and watch bands), and his love for music (he is a guitarist and has a history of playing in bands).

Jacques felt the market needed a luxury brand that was focused on providing custom-made pieces. This inspired his second line, Lombard Bespoke. “We wanted to create a brand separation for the bespoke items because of the target market, and the amount of labour time and detailing involved – each piece becomes a work of art,” he explains. He also sees Lombard Bespoke as a legacy and heritage brand that his sons and daughter could one day be part of. The brand’s luxury custom work includes traveller’s backpacks made from vegetable-tanned leather, and featuring imported Riri zippers, premium solid-brass hardware and a suede internal lining with a hand-felted

The process begins with sketching, and research into practical solutions for every item. Creating a watch strap, for instance, is highly detailed. “You need to be precise and accurate, measuring the watch and buckle widths as well as the client’s wrist size, and advising them on styles and colours to best complement the watch face,” he says.

✕ THE PROJECTS For Jacques, it’s all about pushing boundaries and challenging himself. In 2023, on behalf of Delaire Graff Estate, he worked on pieces for luxury interior design house David Collins Studio, to be used in the estate’s hotel bar. The project included enrobing Osterwald & Sons cabinets in vegetable-tanned leather. “It was a challenge; each panel had to be measured and cut by hand to precisely fit the curves,” he says. “We also hand-stained the colour into the leather to create tonal depth and highlight the grain.” He is currently working on an executive backpack range for Lombard Bespoke. **✓**
beltandband.com | lombardbespoke.com

OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT A rally watch strap in the making; bespoke cigar case; replacement leather belt for a Gucci buckle; padded strap on an IWC watch; custom leather cladding at Delaire Graff Estate’s bar; traveller’s backpack in English Tan; adding branding to the pouch of a backpack; custom leather journal; Belt & Band founder Jacques Lombard.

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