

My Sommer
SADDLEBOOK



SOMMER®

My Summer
SADDLEBOOK



SOMMER's saddles and accessories have been bringing horse and rider together since 1965.

A saddle made by SOMMER is a masterpiece of traditional craftsmanship. With great attention to detail, high-quality products are created primarily by hand that are the result of experience and innovative developments and feature out-of-the-ordinary designs.

To design and manufacture products of high quality is our aim and it is what we attempt to achieve at all times – for the well-being of both horse and rider.

My Sommer Saddlebook is your personal source of reference covering all aspects of your SOMMER saddle.

In addition, *My Sommer Saddlebook* serves as a seal of quality and authenticity and as a unique identifier, since your saddle is the link between you and your great passion.

This handbook will provide you with a comprehensive, easy-to-use overview of all the key information relating to your saddle. We wish you many enjoyable moments with your new SOMMER saddle.



Please note the following!

We recommend that you treat your saddle with great care and attention to ensure that your SOMMER saddle gives you many years of pleasure and enjoyment.

Please note that the product features and options described in *My Sommer Saddlebook* cover the entire range of products. It is possible that options are included that you do not have or are not available for your product.

In the event that you decide to sell your saddle, please pass on *My Sommer Saddlebook* to the new owner. It is an integral part of the saddle.



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My SOMMER

Traditional & Innovative



SOMMER – traditional & innovative

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The company's history

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SOMMER – traditional & innovative

A saddle made by SOMMER combines the traditional craft of the saddle maker and modern technology in terms of design and fit.



As a result of many individual features, your saddle will remain faithful companion for you and your horse the many years to come. Since each horse has its own specific characteristics, it requires a saddle with an optimum fitting to meet the horse's individual requirements. Regardless of which part of the saddle is being examined, whether it is the saddle tree, the gullet plate or the flaps, a SOMMER saddle is designed to meet all the modern anatomical requirements of the horse in all respects and there are many variations that allow the saddle to be modified to meet the specific requirements of both the horse and the rider.



Spine, dorsal spinous processes and shoulders are exposed in order not to hinder the horse's movements. The fully flexible thermoplastic saddle tree and the various types of seat ensure the rider sits comfortably in the saddle – the hand-forged gullet plate provides maximum stability under extremely heavy loads.



Sommer saddles have been bringing horse and rider together since 1965.





The company's history

1965 in Munich – Theo Sommer founds his equestrian saddlery business and right from the start develops a thermo-plastic saddle tree made of synthetic material, which paves the way for saddle design and construction as we know it today. For this and for other outstanding achievements, Theo Sommer in 1976 received the State Award of the Federal Republic of Germany.

In **1970**, new and larger production facilities are erected at the company's current location here in Pirmasens. Here, on the edge of the Palatinate Forest, is where all SOMMER saddles are produced to this day.

The **80s** are characterised by the expansion of the company's international business, which is accompanied by a constant increase in what has now become a much more professional production. SOMMER saddles are known and appreciated today the world over.

Another significant innovation in modern saddle construction is introduced in **1991** – SOMMER saddles become infinitely adjustable.

In **1995**, the company's founder Theo Sommer hands over the running of the company to his son Alexander René Sommer, who, in addition to passing his Master Saddlers examination, also wins Germany's national saddlery competition.



Also in **1995**, the new Evolution trail riding saddle is launched and begins its successful career. Even today, the Evolution remains one of the most popular trail riding saddles worldwide.

At the beginning of the **new millennium**, we develop the so-called sandwich panel, also known today as protection panels – yet another enormous success for modern saddle design and construction.

The company **today** is as innovative and creative as it was 50 years ago. The La Vita saddle tree for seat sizes to 21.5 inches and seat heating for saddles are just two examples of the features that make a SOMMER unique.

What began in a small workshop in **1965** is today living corporate history. Ever since it was founded, the Sommer Saddlery has been one of the pioneers of modern saddle design and construction. And as we move ahead into the future, we will continue to embrace this tradition with enthusiasm and commitment and, together with our innovative skills, to combine the sophisticated with the modern – to satisfy the wishes of horse lovers throughout the entire world.

The YouTube **SOMMER** channel

In our Sommer YouTube channel, you will find many interesting videos about Sommer and our saddle models. Take a look at our saddles in detail and learn more about innovations, the benefits of a Sommer saddle, and much more.



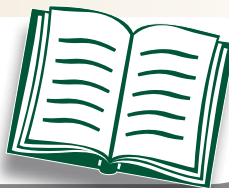
You can access the channel via the **YouTube** search mask, by entering **Theo Sommer Sattlerwarenfabrik GmbH**





My SOMMER

Our Philosophy



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Our philosophy

Horses occupy a special place in our society. They made the transition a long time ago from domestic animal to a companion and friend, and have an important place in our hearts today.

Not only are enthusiastic riders fascinated by their size, beauty and character, even people who themselves have nothing to do with horses are captivated by their looks and personality.

Even in ancient civilisations, horses were regarded as something very special, and in many cases were even considered to be a part of the deity. Their elegance when galloping across an open field with their manes blowing in the wind gives the nostalgic observer an inkling of a freedom that has long been forgotten.

In the following chapters we would like to attempt to present our view of way in which the saddle is linked to the horse's anatomy. This is not intended to be a scientific study, but an outline of our philosophy, which has developed over the years in our collaboration with veterinary surgeons, riders and saddlers.



1. From a source of food to domestic animal

As early as the Stone Age, our ancestors had made acquaintance with the horse, albeit not as an animal to be ridden, but as a source of food. Ice Age hunters used to drive herds of horses over steep cliffs, forcing them to fall to their death below. The Rock of Solutré in Burgundy, France, is thought to be one such site, where such hunting methods were used some 20,000 years ago.

The domestication of the horse is considered to have taken place around 2,700 BC by the Aryans, a nomadic people speaking an Indo-European language who inhabited the steppe stretching north between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. The horse was certainly ridden, but riding was subordinate to the horse's other uses.



2. Scythians and Sarmatians

Unlike the Greeks, Romans and Persians, who placed a simple pad or cloth on the horse's back and secured it with a girth strap and chest harness, the Scythians used a felt saddle cloth or blanket that was often richly decorated, in addition to stirrups.

The saddle cloths were certainly not used for decorative purposes alone. On a long march, they would be folded and placed under the saddle to provide effective protection.

The saddle, which was made of leather and felt, consisted of two saddle panels well stuffed with plucked deer hair held together with leather straps or with a continuous piece of leather. The panels were placed on each side of the spine on top of the saddle cloth in such a way that the rider's weight was distributed over the back muscles and the ribs.

This arrangement corresponds to the principles in use today for fitting the saddle, by which the saddle, in terms of both its length and width, must leave the spine exposed to ensure that it bears no weight.

The Sarmatians inhabited the region to the east of the Scythians. Unlike the Scythians, however, the Sarmatians used heavy cavalry. They are credited with having made the first saddle with a wooden frame or tree.



For us as horse people, what we see in the early development of the saddle and the following period of several thousand years, on the one hand, is slow progress in terms of its technical evolution but, on the other hand, significant innovations that have had a lasting influence on current saddle design and construction, so that we can quite rightly say that the Scythian-Sarmation saddle deserves to be looked on as the earliest form of saddle and precursor of the riding equipment we use today.

3. From then to now

After the foundation for horse riding had been laid by these two peoples in ancient times, today's competition saddles have only developed in the course of the last two centuries – from the fork of a tree, as it were, to a flexible competition seat.

To understand modern saddle design and construction and the relationships between riding style and the resultant behaviour of the horse, some basic understanding of the horse's anatomy is required. In the following chapters, we will focus on three areas: the horse, the rider and the saddle. Please note that our intention is not to propagate alternative theories or doctrines, since there are no alternatives to the anatomy and biomechanics bequeathed to the horse by nature.

The horse's back



Apart from the mouth, the back is one of the most sensitive parts of the animal's body. Nevertheless, it bears the brunt of the burden and is put under most stress when the horse is ridden. We understand the horse's back to mean the thoracic and lumbar vertebrae, along with the associated bones, joints, ligaments, muscles, nerves and tendons.

The back is closely linked to other parts of the body, such as the head and neck, the chest and abdominal wall, in addition to the shoulder and pelvic limbs.

1. Structure of the back

The back consists of a large number of different tissue elements that are closely linked to each other, but should be addressed separately. It is particularly evident in the back how the various structures, such as bones, muscles, ligaments, tendons and nerves interact with each other.

2. The bone structure of the skeleton

The thoracic and lumbar vertebrae make up the bone structure of the horse's back. Compared with the cervical vertebrae, the thoracic and lumbar vertebrae have little curve and, due to their special structure, allow very little movement.

The individual vertebrae have a growth plate at the front the rear end to provide linear growth. The spine of a horse will continue to grow until quite late, with the last growth plates of the spine not fusing until around the age of six. In addition, the dorsal spinous processes of the thoracic vertebrae have their own centres of ossification, which do not complete their growth until the horse is over 10 years of age.

The horse's spine can be likened to a curved chain made up of differently shaped vertebrae. It is composed of 7 cervical vertebrae, 18 thoracic vertebrae, 6 lumbar vertebrae, 5 sacral and 18 to 21 caudal vertebrae.

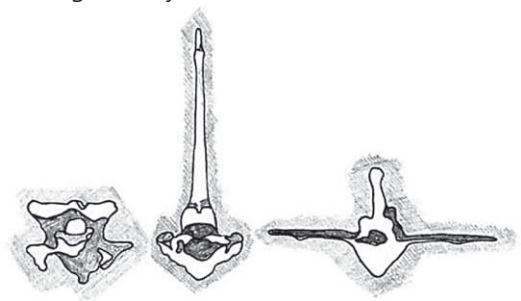
The back can be seen as a bridge construction, with the limbs serving as supporting pillars. When viewed from the side, we should really speak of a spinal bridge rather than a spinal column.

As a result of this structure, the horse's back can easily carry very heavy loads.

The Swiss veterinary surgeon Erwin Zschokke was one of the first Europeans to take precise measurements of movements of the horse's spine. He discovered that the dorsal spinous processes, together with the attached ligamentum supraspinale (supraspinous ligament), are important for the stability of the spine. He also observed that the average lowering of the back under loads weighing from 50 to 80 kg amounted to only 4 cm with intact dorsal spinous processes. He was the first person to describe the change in position of the dorsal spinous processes with respect to the head and neck position.

There are extensions on the thoracic, lumbar and sacral vertebrae projecting upwards, so-called dorsal spinous processes. They lean backwards towards the horse's tail as far as the 15th thoracic vertebra. The 16th thoracic vertebra is upright, after which all the dorsal spinous processes are inclined towards the horse's head. The 18 thoracic vertebrae provide lateral attachment on each side for the 8 pairs of supporting or true ribs and the 10 pairs of respiratory ribs. Together with the sternum, to which the ribs are attached via the costal cartilages, they form a stable, closed rib cage.

This protects the internal organs from injury, on the one hand, while at the same time giving the locomotor apparatus of the horse the stability required to support the rider's weight.



Directions of movement:

We define the four directions of movement today as follows:

- Dorsiflexion – hollowing of the back
- Ventroflexion – arching of the back
- Lateral flexion – bending to one side
- Torsion – axial rotation

The greatest amount of lateral bending occurs when the horse is walking, while most arching and hollowing of the spine occurs when trotting. At walk and trot, we can measure a difference in the level of the spine of 4 to 5 cm, whereas at canter/gallop we measure a difference in level of only 3 cm.

From a practical viewpoint, the sternum also makes it possible for us to attach a girth in the first place, which enables us to ride horses.



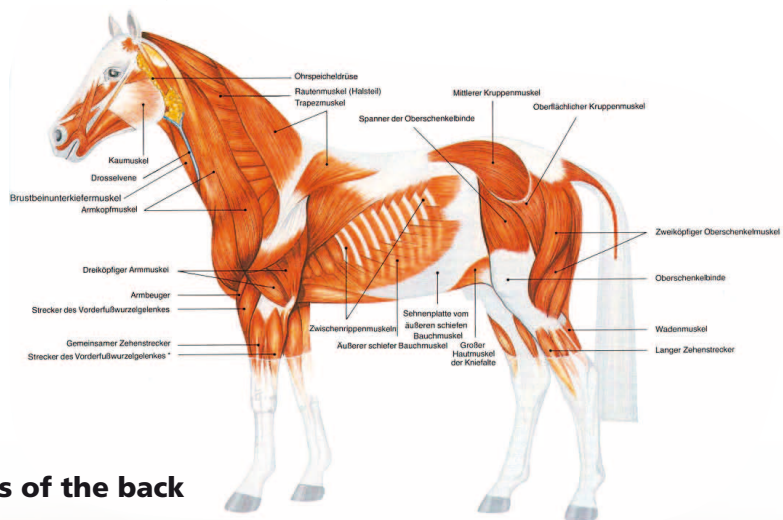
3. 3. The back muscles

Put simply, we can break down the muscles on the back into true and connecting back muscles. We also distinguish between short back muscles and long back muscles.

An important back muscle is without doubt the long back muscle, *musculus longissimus dorsi*, which stretches along the length of the spine. Its purpose is to cover the triangular section between the dorsal and the lateral spinous processes and also to extend over the dorsal spinous processes.

In addition to the muscles lying on top of the spine, other muscles are needed that run under the spine and also have to be trained just like the lumbar muscles.

With respect to the muscles in the trunk and neck, a distinction is made between the upper, middle and lower muscle groups. The upper muscle group includes the long back muscle and the splenius muscle, the middle group includes the long neck muscle and the inner lumbar muscles, and the lower includes the straight abdominal muscle.



4. Functions of the back

Long before man discovered that the horse's back could be used to carry loads, this part of the horse's body had to fulfil a number of important functions. Even if we today mistakenly assume that the back was made for riding, it is actually a subordinate function.

Of the many important jobs it has to perform, a few are mentioned below:

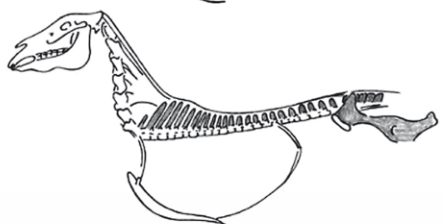
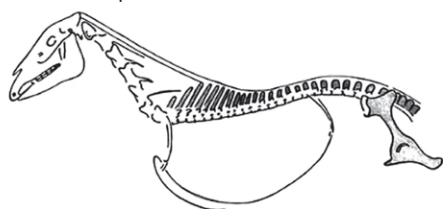
- Protection of the spinal cord
- Protection for the heart and lungs
- Support for the internal organs
- Freedom of movement of the limbs



The back is unquestionably central to the quality of the horse's movement. But what actually happens to the back of the horse when it is ridden and what is important for us when building the right saddle?

Movement

As a result of repeatedly engaging its hindquarters, the horse is forced to round its back. This is also known as bascule. The opposite would be a sagging back or swayback. Close examination of the vertebrae reveals that the dorsal spinous processes between the 14th and 16th thoracic vertebrae are almost upright, i.e. this is where the centre of arching of the spine lies and thus the centre of stability.



Fauques in 1982 was the first person to measure the distance between the dorsal spinous processes on a living horse in motion with respect to the position of the head. He discovered that the distance between the dorsal spinal processes was not dependent solely on the gait, but on the position of the head.

The lowest point of the saddle must lie in this area, therefore, as even a fully grown horse would not be able to endure the stress caused by the weight of an incorrectly positioned rider for an extended period of time.

Dupaty de Clam, musketeer to the King of France, wrote in 1769 in the last chapter of his book on the art of riding on the importance of the centre of gravity of the rider and the horse, and of the effect each one had on the other.

The rider



Let us now take a look at the spinal column of the rider. All we have to do is make sure that the posture we adopt in the saddle is aligned with our biomechanically predetermined plumb line, i.e. in line with the natural curves of our spine in order to bring the plumb line of the horse in harmony with our own plumb line.

- The plumb line must be dropped from the ear, go through the shoulder and hip down to the ankle.
- Correct riding posture means sitting upright, placing the weight evenly over the left and right seat bone.
- Sitting upright does not mean raising the pelvis, but rather letting the pelvis lean forward.

Good balance means having unrestricted movement of the joints and supple muscles to maintain equilibrium in motion.

It is assumed that the kissing spines syndrome is the result of repeated forced, not physiological, lowering of the back. The declining tensile strength of the back muscles and restricted head movement, along with the associated decline in the tension of the spine, may be possible causes.

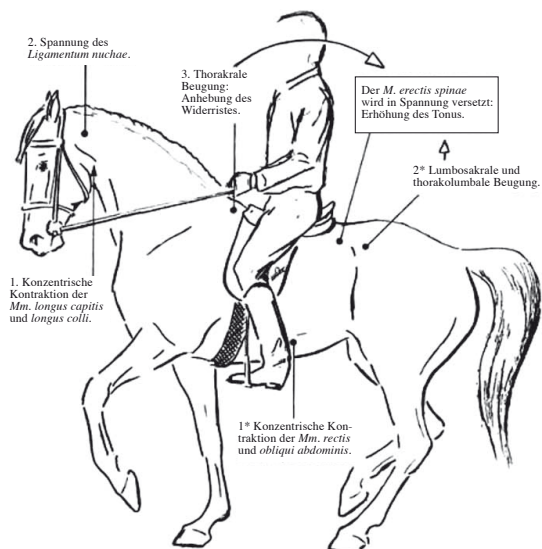
The saddle

A saddle is used to make riding more comfortable and safer for the rider and the same time to protect the animal's back. The saddle that fits both the horse and the rider well will help us to improve our riding, it will place us where the horse would place us if there were no saddle, which would be just behind the withers.

The saddle must fit the horse perfectly, which means it must provide optimum freedom of movement for the shoulder blades, the withers and the curvature of the spine.

From the saddler's viewpoint, the withers is one of the most important parts of the horse's back. This is where the saddle is placed and, when the rider's weight is added, is the position on the back where the total amount of extra weight has to be supported. It should be noted that a horse at rest already supports 55 per cent of its weight on its forelegs and 45 per cent on its hind leg.

The horse's natural balance point, its centre of gravity, is roughly at the level of the sternum, below the middle of the belly. In addition, the thick, approximately 3cm wide back edge of the shoulder blade lies just under the withers. This saddler must also attach considerable importance to this point as well, because this is the where movement of the shoulder blade occurs.



In well-trained horses in particular, the trapezius muscles are well developed behind the shoulder. The trapezius muscles extend upwards, branching out into the long back muscles, with the rib muscles and back muscles intertwine.

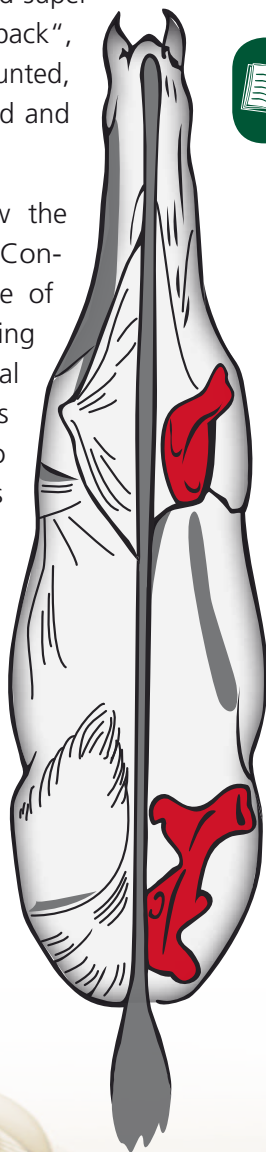
The saddle must permit unrestricted movement of the shoulders. To make this possible, the panels must open on each side at the front. The movement of the shoulders is restricted by

the design of conventional panels, as the shoulder comes up against the front edge of the panels with each movement. Mistakenly, many saddles are heavily padded and narrow in this area, instead of modifying the saddle tree and gullet plate and leaving the panel open.

The so-called front point strap can increase tension in the shoulder by pulling too tightly on the saddle at the front of the saddle tree. This leads to tenseness of the muscles, which, due to the interweaving of the muscles, can extend as far back as the medial and superficial gluteal muscles. This can result in a “cold back”, problems getting the horse on the bit, fear of being mounted, unwillingness to work, flinching when being groomed and lots more.

The shape of the saddle panels must also follow the anatomy of the horse's back as closely as possible. Considerable back problems can occur due to the use of narrow panels especially as a result of the intertwining of the rib muscles with the back muscles. The ideal saddle panel should overlap the rib and back muscles at the point where they meet. If the panels are too narrow, they will press the long back muscle upwards against the vertebrae and the dorsal spinous processes and press the rib muscles downwards.

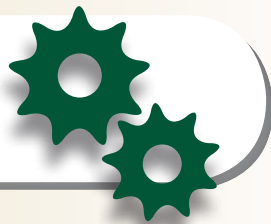
As we can see, a saddle is not only required to accommodate an elastic gait and long stride, it should actually encourage them. This has resulted in a number of fundamental rules of saddle design and construction.





My SOMMER

Production



Saddle design and construction
– key features of a SOMMER saddle

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Behind the scenes of a traditional craft

p. 26

Saddle design and construction

– key features of a SOMMER saddle

1. Saddle tree

In order to accommodate to the movements of the horse and the rider, the saddle tree must be completely flexible both lengthwise and cross-wise. This is due to the fact that a rigid construction would severely impede the harmonious sequence of movements between the rider and the horse. A modern saddle tree should also be adjustable to ensure that it can be modified at any time to compensate for the ever-changing shape of the horse's back.



2. Gullet plate

The gullet plate positioned above the withers gives the saddle tree stability at the head and extends from the shoulder blades downwards and backwards towards the rider. The ends open outwards.

3. Panels, distance between panels and panel width

Panels must be smooth, soft and resilient. The edges must not be allowed to press on the horse's spine and the panels must also widen at the front. The angle of the panel must correspond to the curvature of the horse's back. The panels should run parallel to each other and be at least 6 cm apart.

4. Flocking material

Synthetic fibre is used as saddle flocking material because it is soft and remains flexible, even if it becomes wet. It settles and takes on the shape of the horse's back, yet remains elastic.

5. Girthing arrangements

Girthing begins under the stirrup bar, not at the saddle tree. The girthing arrangement is determined by the natural depth the horse's girth area.

6. Air circulation

The design and construction of the saddle should promote the circulation of air between the horse's back and the saddle and thus prevent any build-up of heat.

7. Materials

Carefully selected materials turn a SOMMER saddle into a natural product that will become finer as it matures with age. Leather produced exclusively for SOMMER products makes its way to our workshops from tanners all over the world.

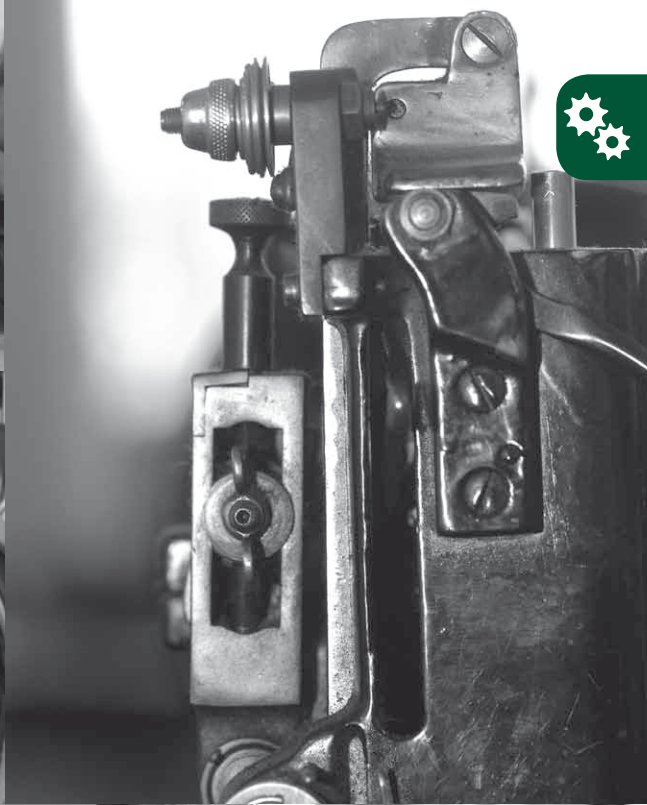
8. Variability

Both the fit and the gullet width can be modified at any time.



Take a look at the video here to see the nine key features of a SOMMER saddle. Simply scan the QR code.





Behind the scenes of a traditional craft

How is a SOMMER saddle produced?

Saddlery is one of the oldest crafts known to man. Then as now, most of the individual steps required for the manufacture of a saddle are completed by hand, and with considerable skill and creativity.

In order to maintain our high quality standards and to be able to offer you as customer the best possible product, we train young people ourselves to become equestrian sport saddlers.

We are a family run company and thus work hand-in-hand in order to bundle the skills of all those involved to create for you and your horse the best that can be made from leather.



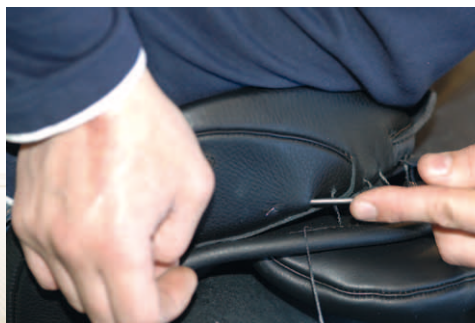
Their workbenches are placed side by side. Tobias and Mario have been working closely together for years and both possess skills that complement each other perfectly. Each step is completed just as it should be, the quality is routine. If any problems occur, they solve them together. Each one helps the other.

Our saddlers are highly qualified craftsmen in a variety of skills, enabling them to be employed in all areas. Synergies complement each other perfectly for a product that is both out of the ordinary of a high quality standard.

You can have a SOMMER built to meet both your individual needs and those of your horse. This means that every saddle we produce is manufactured to your specific requirements and is thus unique. Our production is set up to ensure we can deliver what you need in as straightforward a manner as possible.

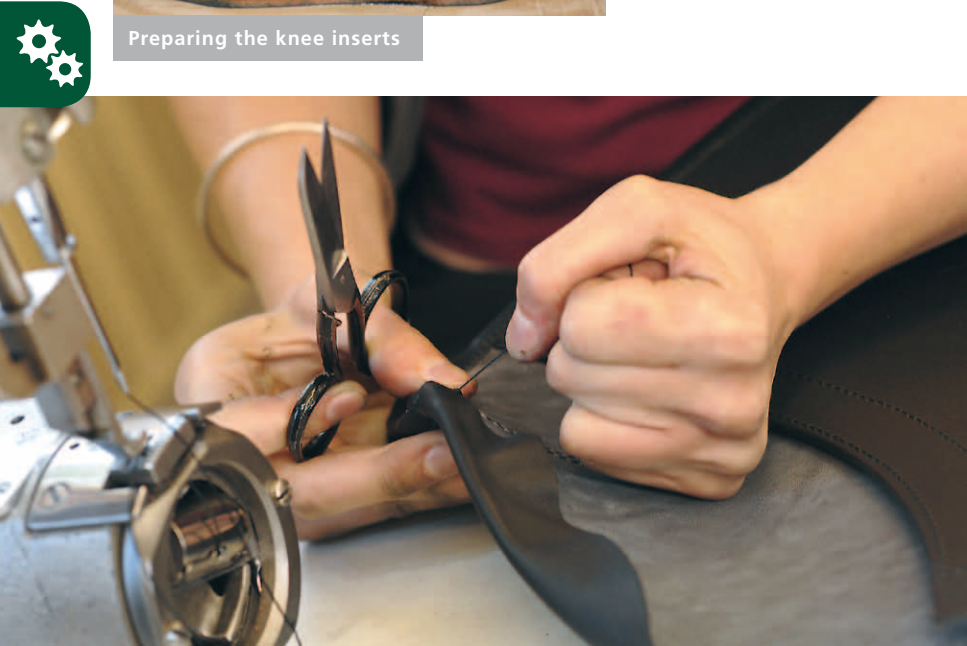
We use only carefully selected materials that comply with our high quality requirements for each SOMMER saddle we produce.

Some 200 individual steps in the manufacturing process are required to create a SOMMER saddle, most of which are completed by hand. Whether the work is done with a punching knife, a head knife (a cutting tool) or with a needle – the work of the saddler always requires a high level of skill and experience.





Preparing the knee inserts



Hand-stitching a folded knee pad. A neat, straight seam is important and requires a lot of experience.



Detailed documentation of the production process



Stamping individual saddle parts, including quality control of the leather



The saddle panels are filled with synthetic wool. Stuffing take place on the saddle itself.

Hand-stitching the saddle panels



My SOMMER

The Saddle



The saddle – a glossary of terms

p. 31



A dressage saddle
with an English
saddle tree

The saddle – a glossary of terms

1. Seat

The seat enables the rider to maintain his balance in the saddle.

2. Cantle

Is the raised back of the saddle behind the seat and differs in terms of height and shape, depending on the shape of the seat and riding style.

3. Saddle panels

The saddle panels distribute the weight of the rider on the horse's back. The panels must lie evenly along the horse's back and must be resilient.

4. Saddle flaps

The saddle flaps are designed to protect the rider's legs and, in combination with the knee pads / knee rolls, to keep the legs in the correct position.

5. Knee rolls

Help to keep the riders leg in the correct position and hold the rider more securely in the seat.

6. Girth strap

The girth straps are used to secure the saddle with a saddle girth.

7. Gullet plate

The gullet plate is positioned at the pommel and determines the gullet width of the saddle. In the case of a Sommer saddle, the width of the gullet is fully adjustable.

8. Pommel

The pommel is positioned at the forward end of the saddle tree and gives it stability.

9. Little pocket

This is a protective flap covering the safety stirrup bars and provides a gentle transition from seat to the leg.

10. Knee pads

In combination with the knee rolls, knee pads keep the leg in the correct position.

11. Skirts

The skirts are used for fastening the stirrup ends.

12. Sweat flaps

Also known as the lowest saddle flaps. They protect the horse when the girth is being tightened and are also designed to protect the saddle from the horse's sweat.





My SOMMER **Saddle Care**



Care instructions	p. 33
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Correct saddle fit	p. 40

Instructions for the care of your saddle

You are in possession of a beautiful, high-quality product made of leather, which needs regular care and attention not only to ensure that it retains its good looks, but also that it will give you many years of riding pleasure and remains safe to use. Take care of your saddle regularly!

Care instructions for your SOMMER saddle

- Use SOMMER care products to ensure your saddle receives the proper nourishment.
- Apply care products to your saddle monthly as required, and more frequently if necessary.
- Apply care products to all parts of the saddle – except the girth straps.
- Store your saddle in a dry and safe place.

What do I need to take care of my saddle properly?

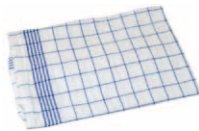
Clean water and
saddle soap,
or leather cleaner



Any commercially available work trestle



A soft cloth



SOMMER Ledosan and Remosol Color



A soft brush



A sponge



and a woollen cloth



Saddle cleaning

Preparation: place your saddle preferably on a commercially available work trestle, such as those you can purchase in any DIY store. This will enable you to reach and clean all parts of the saddle you need to clean.

This makes cleaning your saddle fun and easy to do.



Take care:
do not rub the girth straps of
your saddle with dubbin or
any other similar compound.
This softens the girth straps,
which can make them tear.

Cleaning - in 15 steps



Clean your saddle all over first of all lightly using a sponge moistened in clean water (and saddle soap) to remove any surface dirt, horse hairs and dust from the saddle.

1. Clean the seat and small pocket

Using the moistened sponge, clean the seat and the small pocket.



2. Clean the saddle flaps

The next step is to clean the saddle flaps and the under parts of the small pocket and the stirrup bars.



3. Clean the under parts of the saddle flaps

Clean the under parts of the saddle flaps, the knee rolls and the sweat flap.



4. Clean the panels

Turn the saddle over and clean the panels and the gullet channel thoroughly.





5. Dry the seat and the small pocket

The next step is to dry all the parts of the saddle you have cleaned with a soft cloth. Start again with the seat and the small pocket.



6. Dry the saddle flaps

You can now dry the saddle flaps, the stirrup bars and the under parts of the small pocket.



7. Dry the under parts of the saddle flaps

Dry the under parts of the saddle flaps next, followed by the knee rolls, the sweat flap and the straps.



8. Dry the panels

Turn the saddle over again and dry the panels and gullet channel.





9. Apply care product to the seat

Apply Remosol leather balsam or Ledosan evenly to the upper parts of the saddle seat and small pocket.



10. Apply care product to the saddle flaps

The next step is to apply care product to the upper parts of the saddle flaps.



11. Apply care product to the under parts of the saddle flaps

When you have finished applying leather balsam thoroughly to the outer parts of the saddle, do the same on the under parts. Do not forget the sweat flaps.



12. Apply care product to the panels

Turn the saddle over and apply care product to the saddle panels and the gullet channel.



Complete the process by polishing your saddle with a woollen cloth. Looked after in this way, your saddle will retain its elegant looks and quality for many years to come and will be a source of pleasure and pride when you and your horse go out riding.

Care product absorption

Allow the leather balsam to be absorbed by the leather for a period of 15 minutes. You can then begin with the final polishing of the saddle. Use a woollen cloth for the purpose.



13. Final polishing of the upper parts

First rub off any surplus leather balsam from the upper parts of the saddle and polish the entire surface thoroughly.



14. Final polishing of the under parts

Polish the under parts of the saddle thoroughly – saddle flaps, sweat flaps, etc.



15. Final polishing of the panels

Turn the saddle over and rub off any surplus leather balsam using the woollen cloth and polish the entire surface thoroughly. Do not forget the gullet channel.

Saddle storage

A high-quality saddle should also be stored in a proper manner to ensure that it retains its quality over its entire lifespan.

Store your saddle in a dry and well ventilated area. It is important to ensure that the temperature remains constant. Excessive moisture can lead to mould and mildew growth.

Likewise, strong direct sunlight should be avoided, as this can cause the leather to fade.

The best way to store a saddle is to hang it up, preferably over a saddle stand if possible. There are special saddle racks and stands available designed for this purpose.

To protect your saddle from dust and dirt, should use the saddle cover supplied. This is made of breathable material and is lined with protective fleece.



Correct saddle fit

How can I tell whether my saddle needs to be adjusted?

N.B.: The following checklist for the correct saddle fit is only intended as a general guideline. False interpretations can result in serious consequences for your horse. A comprehensive assessment should always be carried out by an experienced saddle fitter directly on the horse.

If you can identify one of the following points on your horse or saddle, please contact your saddler or local specialist.



1. The saddle is not on the centre of gravity, but either too far in front of or behind it.
2. The saddle is on the withers.
3. The horse reacts sensitively to being touched.
4. The horse shows signs such as head shaking, ears laid back and resistance to attempts at saddling the horse.
5. Cooling due to muscular atrophy in the saddle area.
6. White and/or twisted hairs on the horse's back are a sign of pressure and friction.
7. The pattern of sweating is not uniform and there are dry spots in the area of the panels.
8. The horse's lack of willingness to bend or collect.
9. If you should feel nodules/lumps into the saddle panels.
10. The saddle slips.





My SOMMER Service



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Certification

Since 2006, SOMMER has offered its authorised dealers training courses in saddle fitting. In seminars covering theory and practice, which last several days, the participant is given comprehensive instruction and training in the most important work involved in fitting and modifying SOMMER saddles in accordance with the principles of the traditional saddle maker's craft. At the end of the training course, the participants are presented with a SOMMER certificate and are qualified to carry out whatever is necessary to ensure that bespoke saddles are fitted optimally to meet the requirements of both the horse and the rider. Quality is important to us, also in the services we provide locally.



When you call on a certified SOMMER dealer, you can be sure of receiving excellent service for all SOMMER products.

A list of dealers can be found at www.sattelmacher.com, or contact us personally and we will be delighted to recommend an experienced dealer in your vicinity.

Registration



Each SOMMER saddle is registered with a serial number stamped on the left sweat flap to ensure that the valuable product you have purchased can still be verified after many years in your possession.

Warranty



Before it is allowed to leave our premises, each saddle is subjected to a series of stringent quality control procedures designed to guarantee the high quality of our workmanship. We provide a long-term warranty and a comprehensive range of warranty services on all our saddles.

Warranty services

- 30 years on the saddle tree (excluding damage resulting from accidents).
- 1 year on the leather in the event of manufacturing defects.
- Worldwide service via our network of certified dealers.

Please note

Costs of delivery and return for the performance of any claims under the warranty are to be borne by the purchaser.

Additional services

- Rapid repair and modifications in our workshop
- Fast delivery directly to your premises
- Special requests

Modifications

The SOMMER Flexus system offers you the possibility of adjusting your saddle at any time to the changing needs of your horse's back. It is not only possible to adjust a SOMMER saddle in terms of the gullet width and padding, but also by a variety of modifications, such as adding different panels. In the event that your own personal needs or those of your horse should change, please contact your local SOMMER dealer. He will work with you to find the right solution.

Repairs

SOMMER provides quality craftsmanship and uses the best materials. In the event that a repair is necessary to your saddle, please contact your local SOMMER dealer first. It is possible that minor repairs can be rectified on the spot.



Complaints

You have a 30-year warranty on the saddle tree and the gullet plate, in addition to a 1-year warranty on the leather for any manufacturing defects (please take note of the warranty conditions). During these warranty periods, you may lodge a complaint for any defects to the product you have purchased. Your first contact person in such cases is your local SOMMER dealer.

Leather facts

Leather is a natural product. Small scars or signs of insect bites are not leather defects, but natural characteristics of leather and thus a sign of authenticity. Natural characteristics do not diminish the functional quality of the leather. A piece of leather, by its very nature, can exhibit both major and minor irregularities, such as scars, wrinkles or insect bites.

Such natural characteristics also determine the ability of the leather to absorb dyes. For this reason, colours may vary in any piece of leather. The quality of the leather, however, is not affected by this in any way and they cannot be regarded as valid grounds of complaint.

A white coating on the leather does not constitute a ground of complaint. This is simply fat, which appears on the surface of the leather as a result of a drop in temperature.

Under no circumstances should you use any adhesive/cream/wax or similar paste, as they are aggressive substances and may damage the leather. This kind of damage does not constitute a ground of complaint and is not covered by the warranty.

Horse riding subjects saddles and thus the leather to heavy mechanical loads. The leather also comes into contact with the horse's sweat in particular, which can weaken or seriously damage the leather's protective fat layer. Regular and proper care is important therefore. Take care of your saddle using the guidelines we have recommended only. Do not wash the saddle by spraying or soaking it with water. Stains / damage can occur, which do not constitute a ground of complaint and are not covered by the warranty. You will find care instructions beginning on page 32.



Saddle theft

A saddle is an investment frequently worth several thousand euros. Organised gangs of criminals discovered saddle theft long ago and saddles are now being reported with increasing frequency. Protect your valuable saddle!

Each Sommer saddle is individually registered. The saddle can be verified at any time by means of this serial number. Take care to ensure that you document the purchase of your saddle. Keep the proof of purchase of the saddle in a safe place. "My Sommer Saddlebook" will also provide a place to collect all the important information relating to your saddle. Note down all the key information and details and don't forget: saddles often have a unique identification feature, e.g. a laser engraving.

Even though all saddles have a serial number, the receivers of stolen saddles try to change the number stamped on the saddle or to conceal it in some way. If this is the case, then identification features are important.

Many stolen saddles these days are offered for sale online via auction platforms. If you or the police should recognise the stolen saddle again, you will be able to identify it as yours by means of the undisputable proof of purchase and have the possibility of getting your valuable product back again.



Advice on the subject:

- Document all the features of your saddle, complete with photos.
- Store your saddle in a well secured tack room.
- You can also store your saddle under lock and key in a saddle cabinet.
- If you have no access to a tack room or saddle cabinet, we recommend that you keep your saddle at home.
- Take care to ensure that you use special padlocks that thieves cannot cut through with a pair of bolt cutters or that will take long enough to deter them.
- Surveillance cameras and light systems offer additional protection. Commercial suppliers or international equestrian federations such as the VFD in Germany or the BEF in the UK, for example, provide saddle coding. Insurance companies offer special saddle insurance. Contact your insurance company for details.
- In the event of theft, alert the police immediately.

Flexus system

Every SOMMER saddle can be adjusted again and again with ease and in a straightforward manner, and that has been possible since 1991. Gullet width, topline and padding can be adjusted at any time to the constantly changing needs of the horse's back.

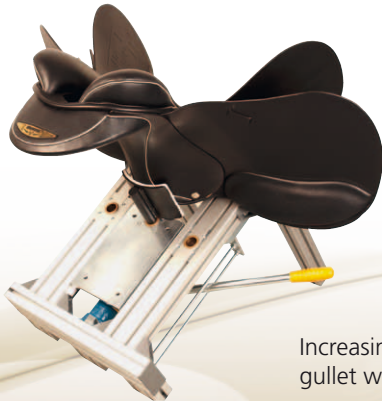
All SOMMER saddles incorporate a specially designed Flexus saddle tree. It is manufactured from an extremely high-grade, thermoplastic technopolymer and is fitted with a hand-forged gullet plate made of a special alloy. Such a saddle tree can be adjusted as often as you wish with no material fatigue. Using the specially developed saddle adjustment device, which is available at your local SOMMER dealer, the width of your saddle's gullet plate can be adjusted directly on the horse at any time.



Saddle adjustment device



Reducing gullet width



Increasing gullet width



Service records

SOMMER cooperates with leading specialists worldwide to provide you with the best possible local service support, wherever you happen to be. Your authorised SOMMER dealer will help you with whatever questions you may have regarding SOMMER products.

Your authorised SOMMER dealer will confirm on each service record which services were carried out on your SOMMER saddle. This ensures that every service performed on your saddle has been documented.

A well-documented service record is also a quality feature of your saddle! Ticking the appropriate confirmation field or including written supplementary information on the following service records provides confirmation of the services that were performed.



The following service was carried out	yes	no
Flocking – partially (Area: _____)	☐	☐
Flocking – adding/removing	☐	☐
Flocking – completely new filling	☐	☐
Gullet – set wider/narrower to size _____	☐	☐
Saddle care treatment	☐	☐
Additional services performed on the saddle	☐	☐

Date/Signature

Dealer's stamp



My SOMMER

Personal Details



Saddle purchase

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My horse

p. 58

My saddle

p. 59

My personal contact details

p. 60

Personal details – saddle purchase

Purchased the saddle from: _____

Purchase date: _____

New owner's surname: _____

First name: _____

Address: _____

Post code/town/city: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Mobile: _____

E-mail: _____

Personal details – saddle purchase

Purchased the saddle from: _____

Purchase date: _____

New owner's surname: _____

First name: _____

Address: _____

Post code/town/city: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Mobile: _____

E-mail: _____



My horse

Horse's name: _____

Year of birth: _____

Breed: _____

Pedigree: _____



Add photo
of your horse



My saddle

Model: _____

Article number: _____

Serial number: _____

Gullet width: _____

Seat size: _____

Type of seat: _____

Colour: _____

Colour of piping: _____

Colour of seams: _____

Type of panels: _____

Year manufactured: _____

Special features: _____



Add photo
of your saddle



My personal contact details

Name: _____

First name: _____

Address: _____

Post code/town/city: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Mobile: _____

E-mail: _____

Address of stables:

Name: _____

Contact person: _____

Address: _____

Post code/town/city: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

E-Mail: _____



My personal contact details

Name: _____

First name: _____

Address: _____

Post code/town/city: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Mobile: _____

E-mail: _____

Address of stables:

Name: _____

Contact person: _____

Address: _____

Post code/town/city: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

E-Mail: _____





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Dates



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Dates



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