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Legacy in Leather

Inspired by legendary adventurers of the past, Chapal perfects the ultimate heirloom jacket.

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To walk through the wooden doors on the rue de Rivoli, up the grand staircase to the Chapal showroom, is to step back in time to an age of *savoir-faire*. Inside this elegant Haussmann apartment, in the heart of the historic Paris fashion district, a stunning array of handcrafted leather jackets awaits, each one more irresistible than the next.

Founded in 1832, Chapal makes leather jackets steeped in aviation and automotive history with a contemporary edge. Celebrating a spirit of high-speed accomplishment, these are garments intended to be worn for a lifetime then passed to the next generation. The company's devoted following includes celebrities, aviators and racing car enthusiasts—modern-day adventurers who seek a connection with the storied past.

Chapal is that rare entity: a family-run fashion house that is steadfastly preserving artisan methods mastered through the centuries. Jean-François Bardion is the eighth generation of his family to lead the company along its independent path. "We have never used suppliers to make our jackets," he says. "We have full control of each step." Chapal takes great pride in meticulously crafting a jacket to individual customer specifications, delivering a fit and feel that only expert handwork can create. >



Eighth-generation president Jean-François Bardion in the Chapal Paris showroom, which was once his family home.

A selection of Chapal racing jackets (opposite) reflects the family's passion for vintage automobiles.

BESPOKE



"The only moment where I am happy is when the client says, 'it's perfect.'"

—JEAN-FRANÇOIS BARDION
Chapal President



At Chapal's historic tannery and workshop, a team of leather artisans craft each jacket by hand using traditional methods. A wooden pattern (top) is cut to ensure a personalized fit.

Heritage Par Excellence

Chapal started out as a supplier of fine leathers and furs in the 19th century. During World War I the company began producing sheepskin leather jackets for the French Air Force, and Chapal has been linked with aviation ever since. Notably, Charles Lindbergh wore a Chapal A1 jacket on his famous Atlantic solo flight in 1927.

After patenting an innovative waterproof coating for leather, Chapal created flight jackets for the U.S. Air Force during World War II. Today, Chapal continues to produce these iconic aviator jacket styles—USAAF, A1, RAF, 1914—for a new generation of clients.

Chapal garments are still entirely handcrafted in France. The hides are from sheep raised in Les Causses, a mountainous region in the southeast. The

company operates its own tannery, a rarity in the industry. Every step of the fabrication takes place at Chapal's historic workshop in central France, where artisans use tools and handcraft techniques from one century ago. The hides are vegetable tanned, dyed in wooden barrels and air-dried. The master cutter slices the leather using a pattern—it typically takes 32 cut pieces to form one jacket. Tailors sew each garment from start to finish.

Bardion works closely with his team of 20 artisans. "My family has deep respect for the skilled leather artisans we have worked with over the years," he says. "It is an important responsibility for us to have a valued relationship with our workers." >



Left: the workshop. Right: the interior label.

BESPOKE



A hidden pocket label is signed by the tailor who sewed the jacket from start to finish. Bespoke orders begin with a custom fitting at the Chapal showroom (top).

A Bespoke Experience

Chapal's bespoke services take the luxury of finely crafted leather jackets to an exceptional level of detail. All the iconic Chapal aviator and driving jacket styles can be made-to-measure for men and women. Clients can also special-order materials—leather finishes, linings in silk or British flannel, detachable shearling collars. For a one-of-a-kind statement, Chapal will embellish the jacket with custom embroidery, patches or even tattoos to commemorate memories and events.

The process begins with a visit to the showroom in Paris, where Bardion meets with the client. If an in-person visit is not possible, the Chapal team makes it a point to talk by phone. "It's important to hear their voice, to know who will be wearing the jacket," says business manager Laurence Luçon.

"We ask questions, not just about the look of the jacket but how do you want it to feel?"

Clients are invited in for a private fitting, where more than 20 body measurements are taken to achieve the legendary Chapal fit. Once a pattern is cut, the tailor takes over, creating one jacket at a time, from assembling and sewing to finishing the lining and details.

A natural wax finish produces the leather's rich, varnished patina; it's a formula that has been in the family for five generations. Bardion designs and supervises all bespoke orders himself. As keeper of the Chapal family heritage, he does not rest until the garment has been properly fitted, finished and delivered. "The only moment where I am happy is when the client says, 'it's perfect.'" >

THE 1914 JACKET

Originally made for the French Air Force, the 1914 is one of many Chapal jacket styles that can be custom tailored. Clients can create a signature heirloom jacket from a menu of bespoke options.



Top: front view. Bottom: back view.

01. Leather. Choose a fine leather from a range of colors and finishes. A detachable sheep fur collar is available on select jackets.



02. Lining. Browse a selection of cotton gabardines, French silks and British flannels.

03. Personalization. Add a signature touch with a custom patch, tattoo or monogram.



04. Detailing. Specify stitching color and the shape and number of pockets.

