

# This Leather is Sexy Too!

An Interview with Simon J. Critchell,  
Chief Executive, Alfred Dunhill, Ltd., London



Simon J. Critchell

**EDITORS' NOTE**

*Critchell obtained a B.A. from King's College London and an M.B.A. at INSEAD in France. After working for L'Oréal S.A. in several countries, he joined the Richemont Group in 1990 as president and CEO of Cartier, Inc. In 2001 he*

*was invited to take up his current post.*

**COMPANY BRIEF** *Founded in 1893 by gentleman-inventor Alfred Dunhill, Alfred Dunhill, Ltd. is now Britain's leading luxury-goods house and a world-famous supplier and distributor of luxury goods, including lines of leather-goods, timepieces, writing instruments, gentlemen's accessories, and high-quality menswear. The company is owned by Compagnie Financière Richemont, a luxury-goods conglomerate based in Zug, Switzerland.*

**Dunhill has recently launched two new leather-goods product lines.**

**One of these is called Tradition, while the other is known as Sidecar. What is the difference between these two collections?**

First of all, one of my first projects on arrival at Dunhill was the acquisition of a traditional leather-luggage workshop in London. The factory creates products using only the finest, English bridle leather. Bridle leather is made using traditional, English tanning techniques, giving it a specific color, look, and waxy feel, and it is completely natural. Free of any chemical treatment, it lasts forever, ages beautifully, and develops a wonderful patina. Along these lines, the Tradition collection is manufactured completely by our craftsmen, and its "Made in England" label is a true rarity.

The Sidecar line goes back to the early days of the house, when Alfred Dunhill himself was involved in making all things needed for the pioneering motorist. It had long been a horse-drawn world, so as motorcars arrived on the scene, Dunhill quickly became interested and manufactured the necessary accessories to make the experience a little more pleasurable.

The Sidecar line is for the business

traveler and includes everything from key cases to wallets to document cases to luggage. The products in this line are made from grained leather, treated to be scratch resistant. As such, it's very much a line of accessories for the modern man on the move.

**The Sidecar product line also includes some whimsical pieces, such as the Sidecar Racing Cap.**



Yes, exactly. People feel they evoke the fun of open-topped motoring, and the caps, like all of the products, are off to a very brisk start and have been very well received by the press and customers alike. They are wonderful for driving in convertibles. The Sidecar name, of course, was borrowed from Dunhill's motoring history when we used to make sidecars for the more adventurous motorist and passenger.

**Alfred Dunhill has a rich and long history, and many world famous celebrities have been customers of the company over the years.**

This is indeed true. As I mentioned, Alfred Dunhill himself supplied Britain's social elite with the accessories to meet their motoring requirements, and some of these original pieces survive in museums today. Additionally, Dunhill produced fine tobaccos, pipes, and other

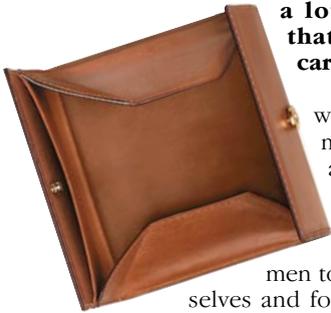


gentlemen's requisites. Over the years, our products have found favor with the British royal family, and indeed with some of the world's other royals. And since introducing our products to the American market after WWI, our customer base has included notables such as Douglas Fairbanks, Frank Sinatra, Rudolph Valentino, and Cary Grant. So we were as popular with the show business aristocracy as we were with the upper crust of old Europe. Our popularity continues today.

**What is the Dunhill Globetrotter line?**

The Globetrotter line is another leather-goods collection actually made from original basketball leather.

**With the Sidecar and Tradition product lines, it looks like you offer a lot of products that a lady could carry with ease.**



Absolutely; we welcome female customers, and we do believe that Dunhill is a friendly place for women to shop for themselves and for gifts. After all, luxury is appreciated by both men and women.

**Your product descriptions all sound wonderfully British – the Dunhill Sidecar Barrel Holdall in bitter-chocolate grained cowhide, for example. Who comes up with these descriptions?**

You know, everyone in England speaks like that! ●



*A selection from the Dunhill Sidecar and Tradition lines*

