

TO INFINITY AND BEYOND

*First, there is that name: “Vasco da Gama”. How very evocative.
Of a ship riding the waves, cold sea foam on skin. Captain and crew driven
ever further by a spirit of exploration. Until the sea route from Europe to India is finally discovered.
That’s how it might have been at the end of the 15th Century on board
Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama’s ship.*

Text • Oliver Roscher | Photos • Anchor Mills. Co. Ltd.



vasco
CLASSIC
GENUINE LEATHER
MADE IN JAPAN

Just close your eyes and you can imagine it. Once you open your eyes again, the sea foam may turn out to be drizzle – somewhere in the asphalt-covered desolation of some town somewhere. That is when those with bags by “Vasco” are the lucky ones. Because they will always carry a tiny bit of da Gama’s adventurous spirit with them, wherever they may be.

“Vasco” is the name of a small, Japanese company for bags and leather goods. “Travel Items” as the company likes to humbly describe its products. And in the spirit of the company’s adventurous namesake, its products are intended for explorers, for travellers – for the lifelong journey. Because that is the company’s credo: Vasco hopes their bags become “the last item left in the end of your lifelong journey”. They have to be full of life and tell their owner’s story. In a time when mass-production is the standard, Vasco instead



believes in timeless products that last an entire life long and whose owners do not chase every trend.

The manufacture’s site is perhaps also an expression of this attitude. Vasco produces in Tokyo’s Koenji quarter, away from the hectic quarters like Shibuya and Harajuku. There, surrounded by parks and green spaces, its bags and leather goods are made mainly by hand. Currently, there are eight specialists working on Vasco’s premium-quality products and the company is part of the Anchor Mills. Co. Ltd.

And even the company’s boss, Ken Namiki, is hands-on. He founded the company in 2009 and now dyes and refines its products. His knowhow is the result of working as a buyer for various vintage shops in the past. And when it comes to leather, Namiki has become a real expert. He has developed an intuition for the way leather develops and changes over time. This is why he insists on very special materials for Vasco’s products. “We use vegetable-tanned full leather, produced in Himeji in Hyogo prefecture,” Namiki explains. “They have a natural finish for simple dyeing and processing in our factory.” The result is the bag’s characteristic vintage-like texture.

The extraordinary thing about these bags is the process that begins after their completion. Ideally, it lasts an entire lifetime.



