

THE RAGS ROAD TEST, NO 1: JEANS

Text by Donna Broeham and Jon Carroll Photographs by Bill Owens and Philip Freund



Road test team chats informally before initiation of "Pull Test." Products are in foreground.

THE PURPOSE:

To subject diverse pairs of "blue jeans" to sturdy tests designed to determine or reveal certain characteristics of the selected products. All testing was conducted by Independent Research Laboratory, Inc. a wholly-owned subsidiary of Rosy Cheeks Publishing, Inc. a California corporation.

THE PRODUCTS

All products were purchased from retail outlets within the city and county of San Francisco. Sales personnel at the stores were not told of the purpose for which the products were being purchased. The following products were used throughout the test:
One pair Levi's Bell Bottoms—\$7.50
One pair Lee Riders—\$6.98

One pair Wranglers—\$6.98
One pair Seafarers—\$5.98
One pair Frisco Can't Bust 'Ems—\$6.98
One pair Maverick Hondos—\$6.98
One pair Leggs—\$6.98
One pair Sears Roebucks—\$5.98
One pair Penney's Ranchcraft—\$3.79



Quality Control observes possible product breach, assisted by Timer and Project Director, during "Pull Test."

THE PULL TEST

Location: A generally circular parking area 11 feet above sea level on the northeast shore of Lake Merced within the city and county of San Francisco, some 1.1 miles from the Pacific Ocean at its closest point.

Weather conditions: Fair with some high clouds. Slight westerly wind, temperature 68 degrees.

Personnel: Pull Car Driver, Retaining Car Driver, Photographer, Timer, Quality Control, Project Director.

Method: Each leg of the product was knotted slightly below the knee, and a six-foot length of 7/16 inch diameter truck rope was tied just above the knot. The untied end of one rope was secured to the rear bumper of a 1969 grey standard shift Volkswagen (the Pull Car). The untied end of the other rope was secured to the rear bumper of a 1968 red automatic shift Volkswagen (the Retaining Car). The Pull Car moved slowly away from the Retaining Car until both legs of the product were lifted from the ground and suspended in a loosely taut position. Then, as the Retaining Car Driver held his automobile

motionless by employing the emergency brake, the Pull Car Driver slowly and steadily accelerated his automobile. The effect of the stress on the product was noted by Quality Control and the Project Director. The Pull Car Driver was instructed to stop accelerating his automobile at the end of 10 seconds (as determined by the Timer) or when Quality Control determined that a breach in the integrity of the fabric had occurred. The Timer noted the interval between the initial acceleration and the breach, which

was considered significant in determining the stress capabilities of the product. The Project Director then noted the nature of the rift, which was considered significant in determining the area and nature of minimal product stress capabilities.

Results: The following table indicate test results. Ratings are based on an objective weighing of the varied factors involved.

Note: This and most other subsequent tests were witnessed by a former resident of New York State.

Product	Time	Location of Initial Product Breach	Rating
Levi's	2.5 secs.	Crotch and leg seam	Satisfactory
Lee Riders	7.5 secs.	Lateral tear in leg just above knot	Excellent
Wranglers	3.5 secs.	Lateral tear in leg just above knot	Good
Seafarers	2.5 secs.	Lateral tear in leg just above knot	Poor
Can't Bust 'Ems	6.5 secs.	Material next to seam ripped, but seam remained intact	Excellent
Mavericks	1.5 secs.	Crotch seam	Poor
Leggs	3 secs.	Crotch seam	Satisfactory
Sears	2 secs.	Crotch seam	Poor
Penney's	5 secs.	Crotch seam	Good



Crotch area of "Can't Bust 'Ems" before "Pull Test."



Crotch area following "Pull Test." Note excellent seam integrity.



Levi's product following "Pull Test." Seam breach is clearly visible.

ROAD TEST

THE WEAR TEST

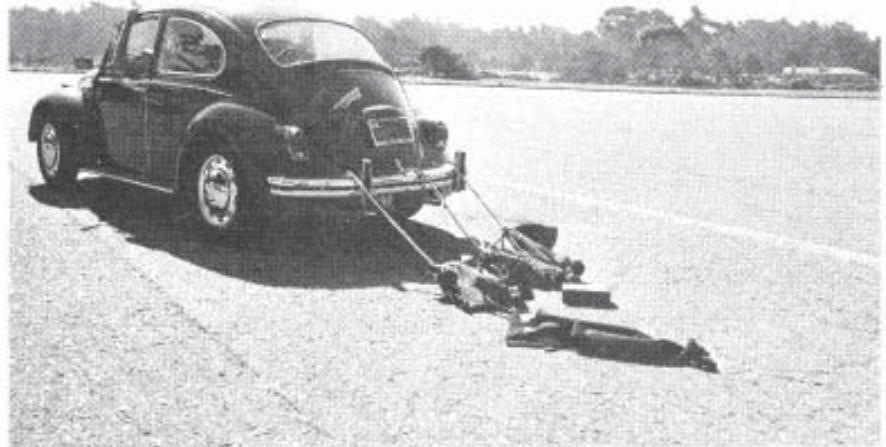
Location: Same as Pull Test

Weather conditions: Same as Pull Test, with the exception of the temperature, which had climbed to 69 degrees.

Personnel: Test Car Driver, Photo Car Driver, Pace Car Driver, Photographer, Quality Control, Project Director.

Method: One leg of the product was knotted securely slightly below the knee, and a nine-pound brick (by the Los Angeles P.B. Company) was inserted into the leg cavity. A rope was knotted around the same leg of the product just above the location of the brick, which had been maneuvered until it was resting contiguously with the product knot. The other end of the rope was fastened to the bumper of a 1968 red automatic shift Volkswagen (the Test Car). Product samples were attached to the left, center and right portions of the rear bumper to achieve more uniform test results and conserve time. The test driver then ignited the engine of his automobile and accelerated to 10 miles an hour, driving a uniform-surface circular course approximately 3/20s of a mile in circumference. A 1968 dark green automatic shift Plymouth Fury III (the Pace Car) followed behind the Test Car at an average distance of 22 feet, with the Project Director and Quality Control seated on the right front hood for maximum visibility. When the integrity of the fabric was breached to an extent that the brick fell from the leg cavity on to the ground, the temporal interval between the initial acceleration and the final breach was noted by the Project Director, assisted by Quality Control. This data was considered significant in determining the resistance of the fabric to wear.

Results: The following table indicates test results. Ratings are based on an objective weighing of the various factors involved.



Test car during "Wear Test." Note brick in right foreground.

A SPECIAL TEST

Location: Parking area of London Britches, a retail clothes store, less than one-half mile from the final docking point of the windjammer Balclutha.

Weather: Clear and fair, with light variable winds. Temperature 76 degrees.

Personnel: Tester #1, Tester #2, Timer, Photographer, Quality Control.

Method: In the interests of total scientific inquiry, it was decided to perform as test for which we had no comparisons, and which thus had minimal scientific validity. For this purpose, one pair of Landlubbers (\$7) was selected. Within two minutes of purchase, Tester #1 firmly grasped one leg of the product while Tester #2 firmly grasped the other. At a signal from the Timer, Tester #1 and Tester #2 pulled in opposite directions. Midway through the test, the Timer grasped Tester #2 about the waist to add to the stress factor. At the end of 40 seconds, no significant changes were noted in the fabric. The



product was then placed on the ground and the right rear tire of a 1968 automatic shift Plymouth Fury III was maneuvered until it rested on one leg of the product. Tester #1 then firmly grasped the other leg and, at a signal from the Timer, applied stress to the product to the comfortable limits of his physical strength. In 6.5 seconds, the product tore effortlessly along the crotch seam. The blue and white striped pants (by King-Size Clothiers, Brockton, Mass.) worn by Tester #1 throughout the test appeared unharmed.

Dramatic results of "Wear Test." Legs are clearly visible through holes.



Product	Time	Rating
Levi's	1 min, 45 secs.	Satisfactory
Lee Riders	3 min, 7 secs.	Excellent
Wranglers	1 min, 15 secs.	Satisfactory
Seafarers	37 secs.	Poor
Can't Bust 'Ems	1 min, 3 secs.	Satisfactory
Mavericks	45 secs.	Poor
Leggs	1 min, 40 secs.	Satisfactory
Sears	1 min, 30 secs.	Satisfactory
Penney's	2 min, 22 secs.	Good

THE ALCOHOL TEST

Location: Little-used garret at 746 Brannan St, San Francisco, less than two miles from the World Headquarters of the Bank of America.

Weather conditions: Fair, partly cloudy with slight westerly wind. Temperature 72 degrees.

Personnel: Holder, Pourer, Sommelier, Photographer, Quality Control, Project Director.



Ethyl alcohol is integrated with products during "Alcohol Test."

Method: A large outdoor-class urethane polyester bag, commonly known as a "trash can liner," was placed inside a large black janitorial-strength metal drum and held in an open position by the Holder. All the products, including variously-sized remnants created by earlier tests, were placed inside the bag in a cautiously random manner. The Pourer, assisted by the Sommelier, then poured two gallons of Gallo Paisano Red Country Table Wine into the bag, followed by one pint of Cream of Kentucky Bourbon whiskey, followed by three quarts of Regal Select Light Beer. For comparison, one of the ropes used in the Pull and Wear tests was also placed inside the container. The bag was then twisted shut and bound with stiff rope. The products were then allowed to steep in the resultant mixture for 48 hours. At the end of that interval, the rope was unknotted and holes were punched in the bag, which was held

over a standard bathroom toilet to allow the liquid material to flow into the water below. The products were then removed from the bag, and various routine hand and eye tests relating to the appearance of the products were performed. This data was considered significant in determining the palpable changes in color, texture and fabric caused by exposure of the products to various fermentations of ethyl alcohol for a prolonged period of time. Quantities were considered equivalent to the amount of ethyl alcohol commonly precipitated on a product during its natural lifetime.

Results: The following table indicates test results. Comments in quotes are those of Quality Control. Ratings are based on an objective weighing of the various factors involved.

Note: The rope, which had been included for purposes of comparison, turned a rich purple that was favored by all who saw it. Excellent.

Product	Appearance	Rating
Levi's	Very dark, material stiff	Satisfactory
Lee Riders	Material much softer	Satisfactory
Wrangler's	Material much softer	Satisfactory
Seafarers	Fabric extremely flimsy	Poor
Can't Bust 'Ems	Material softer	Satisfactory
Mavericks	No observable change	Good
Leggs	Very frayed, material stiff	Satisfactory
Sears	Material slightly softer	Good
Penney's	No changes. "Smells lovely!"	Satisfactory

THE BLEACH TEST

Location: Laundromat A, Fifth and Fulton Streets, San Francisco, four and one-half miles from the western anchorage of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge.

Weather: Fair with some low cloudiness. Temperature 71 degrees.

Personnel: Quality Control, Photographer.

Method: Quality Control transported the products to Laundromat A within one half hour of the conclusion of their immersion in various fermentations of ethyl alcohol. Some odor was noted still adhering to the products. 55 percent of the products were placed in a standard top-loading Hotpoint coin-operated washing machine with one half gallon Clorox brand chemical bleach, then put through one complete wash cycle at the maximum possible temperature ("Very Hot"). The products were then dried in a standard front-loading sil-

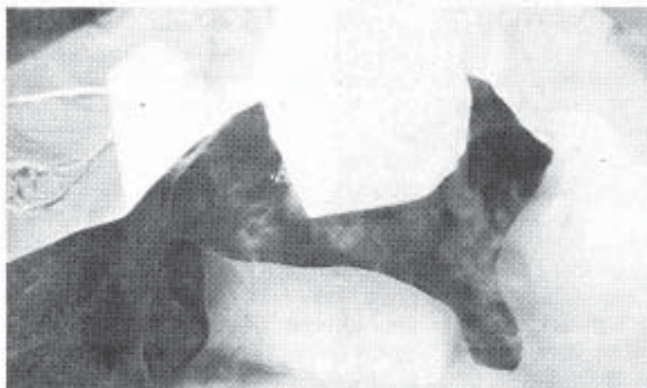
ver commercial-size clothes dryer at the maximum possible temperature until Quality Control determined that the amount of moisture remaining in the products was functionally insignificant. The remaining 45 percent of the products were simultaneously subjected to identical tests under identical conditions. The products were then examined to determine changes in the

color and texture of the fabric. This data was considered significant in determining the nature and degree of the resistance of the products to chemical bleach.

Results: The following table indicates test results. Comments in quotes are those of Quality Control. Ratings are based on an objective weighing of the various factors involved.

Product	Appearance	Rating
Levi's	Light, even bleaching. "Beautiful!"	Excellent
Lee Riders	Pale, very blotchy. Fabric holds up well	Satisfactory
Wranglers	Blotchy	Satisfactory
Seafarers	Blotchy. Material shredding badly	Poor
Can't Bust 'Ems	Turned a pale tan-charcoal	Poor
Mavericks	Fairly even coloring	Good
Leggs	Slight, even bleaching	Good
Sears	Turned a flat, even gray. Fabric very soft	Satisfactory
Penney's	Even, soft bleaching	Excellent

ROAD TEST



Products were frozen (left), freeze pattern (right) was noted

THE FREEZE TEST

Location: Boardman Alley, San Francisco, less than one block from the San Francisco Hall of Justice.

Weather: Fair and clear, variable winds. Temperature 75 degrees.

Personnel: Pounder, Timer, Photographer, Quality Control.

Method: 25 pounds of solid carbon dioxide, a commonly-used refrigerant (it evaporates as a gas at -78.5 degrees C) also known as "dry ice," was purchased from Harold's Ice Service of San Francisco. Simultaneously, a standard three-gallon Dan-Dee lightweight metal refuse disposal container was half filled with common tap water (primarily H₂O with traces of many other elements, including silicone, lead, iron, chlorine, fluorine and

several complicated molecules of various industrial chemicals, herbicides and pesticides) thought to originate at the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir in east central California. One leg of each product in turn was soaked in the tap water for approximately five seconds, then placed between two blocks of "dry ice" for two minutes. The blocks of solidified CO₂ were then removed (at the instruction of the Timer) and the resulting freeze pattern examined for aesthetic worth. This data was considered significant in determining the random aesthetic characteristics of the products. The frozen portion of the fabric was then struck firmly 10 times with a 12-inch miniature sledge hammer (brand label obscured from

long use) on loan to the Independent Research Laboratory, Ltd, from a member of the International Typographical Union. Rents and/or tears in the fabric were noted according to their appearance at specific hammer blows, numbering the first blow #1, the second blow #2, and thus sequentially up to the final blow, which was labeled #10. This data was thought to be significant in determining the product resistance to sub-zero (Centigrade) temperatures.

Results: The following table indicates test results. Comments on aesthetic qualities are those of the Pounder. Ratings based on an objective weighing of the various factors involved.

Product	Rents (by size and hammer blow number)	Freeze Pattern	Rating
Levi's	#7 (small), #8 (small)	"Almost like suede"	Good
Lee Riders	#6 (small), #7 (large), #8 (large)	"Aesthetic B-plus"	Satisfactory
Wranglers	#6 (small)	Ordinary	Excellent
Seafarers	#6 (small), #7 (large), #8 (large)	"Beautiful"	Satisfactory
Can't Bust 'Em	#2 (small)	Ordinary	Excellent
Mavericks	#1 (small), #4 (large), #5 (small), #6 (large), #7 (small), #8 (large), #9 (large), #10 (large)	"Unimpressive"	Poor
Leggs	#6 (small), #9 (small), #10 (small)	"Freeze-Rorschach"	Good
Sears	#4 (small), #5 (small), #6 (large), #7 (small), #8 (large), #9 (large), #10 (large)	Ordinary	Poor
Penney's	#6 (small), #7 (large), #8 (large), #9 (very large), #10 (very large)	Inferior	Poor



The frigid area was struck with a hammer during "Freeze Test."



Results of all tests were carefully tabulated by research team.

COLLATION

The following table represents a collation of the products by rating. Numbers represent the number of times the specific product has received the specific rating.

Note: These tests indicate only the reaction of certain products to highly specialized varieties of stress. Any general extrapolation is indulged in only at some risk to the reader's rational constructs of reality.

Remember: No test is a substitute for personal experience guided by wisdom and prudence. Not to be taken internally. 🐾

Product	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Levi's	1	1	3	0
Lee Riders	2	0	3	0
Wranglers	1	1	3	0
Seafarers	0	0	1	4
Can't Bust 'Ems	2	0	2	1
Mavericks	0	2	0	3
Leggs	0	2	3	0
Sears	0	1	2	2
Penney's	1	2	1	1