

WORK PLAY ROCK 'N' ROLL

TRAVEL

GUIDED BUY: FOR THE MUSIC PROFESSIONAL ON-THE-GO
BY ROBIN A. ROTHMAN

I've got a weird thing for travel-sizes. Maybe it's the trauma of scrapping perfectly good stuff all across Europe. My friend warned: "You bring it, you wear it," but it took trekking uphill with a beast on my back to understand. Or maybe it's that at only 5' I'm partial to the "bigger isn't better" philosophy. Point is, I can't resist those tiny salt and pepper shakers that come with room service, one-gulp airplane liquor bottles, or anything that lets me cram more crap into less luggage when I'm going out of town. For this issue I've gathered items for likeminded frequent fliers who won't suffer baggage claim, insist on efficiency and refuse to sacrifice style, comfort or productivity.

PACK IT UP, PACK IT IN

Think about it, traveler; you're really only as smart as your suitcase. Less space, less waste. So I tested the Eagle Creek Deuce Deuce. The top handle's poor positioning (width-wise, not length-wise) and lack of a shoulder strap (or D-rings to add one) make it awkward to lift, but the back opens into rolling luggage or a padded backpack. You're not likely to carry it the old-fashioned way anyway. This 22-incher seems small, but with increased airport security, it's actually ideally sized to meet the major airlines' newly enforced carry-on requirements. A soft shell allows overstuffing, meaning a tight squeeze on some planes. Just unclip the removable day pack for a sure fit. The front compartment keeps passport, keys, and tickets accessible, which

might help those idiots who wait until they're looking security in the eye to search for their ID. Such slackers might also benefit from the Outdoor Research Timbuktu Travel Wallet. This document holder collects credit cards, passports, IDs, boarding passes and money, and includes an over-the-shoulder strap to keep it handy. A wider version holds PDAs, too. For inside the bag, I tried Lewis N. Clark's Packing Cubes. I thought these mesh-topped zipper receptacles would cost more space than they'd save, but they're useful for maintaining order. Fill them full and they compress contents to maximize nooks 'n' crannies. The large barely fits in the double-Deuce, but the medium proved perfect for T-shirts and I like the little guy for undies and socks.

For fans listening at home or dancing at a live gig, it's simple—it's all about the music. But there's a lot that goes on behind the scenes (and with it a huge cast of characters) to bring that ultimate jam for your listening pleasure. There's marketing, publicity, advertising, promotion, travel, writing... in short, the business of music. In the spirit of the annual SXSW music and film conference (providing something useful for everyone), we present our mini-guide to areas of special interest to those in the music business. Whether you're in front of the crowds or behind the scenes, if you write about music for a living or are just the ultimate fan, you'll find a little something here for anyone whose business in life is the business of music.



Relix • February/March 2003



THE SKY

Wisdom dictates that the journey is as important as the destination. You've stowed your stuff, your seatbelt's buckled, tray's locked and seat's in the upright position. Take a deep breath and blow on Lewis N. Clark's Original Neckrest. This inflatable waterproof travel pillow folds flat and stores in a pouch. While it's covered in fuzzy material and adjusts to neck size, its wrap-around rectangular U-shape can be uncomfortable. Brookstone's Buckwheat Hull Travel Pillow—a far bulkier and pricier alternative—takes a less-constricting crescent shape and includes a soft (washable) fleece cover and extra beanbag-like hulls to adjust to preference. It's heaven to rest your head on, but hell to pack. Either way, once you're comfy, kick back, grab a book and flip open Brookstone's Folding Booklight. They say you'll get 100,000 hours out of it. I didn't have time to check, but I do know that it won't burn to touch if left on for a while, that turning pages and switching sides is a small price to pay, and that it's not enough to interrogate your neighbor but adequately bright for squint-free reading.

CHECK IN AND CHECK IT OUT

Ziplocks won't do. No self-respecting traveler flies without a bathroom kit. Personally, I like the Outdoor Research Hanging Travel Toiletry Kit. It's got two large, zip compartments, a smaller detachable case, and a seamless mirror. Products are mainly name brand (Soft&Dry, Colgate, Scope) and range from facial cleanser to cramp pills. O.R. has variations on the theme, but of course, I checked out the ladies' kit because, well, I'm a chick. As such, stereotypes also dictate that I pack at least two outfits for every one I actually

need (not to mention shoes). However, I happen to know that repurposing, especially with clothing, is integral to intelligent packing. Canada's Austin House, therefore, has concocted a so-simple-it's-genius set to relieve your stink in the process. The Laundr' Pac includes a suction-cupped bathtub clothes line, five single-use Woolite packets and a sink/tub stopper for soaking. Sold separately: a tube of Bio Suds (concentrated detergent/fabric softener) lasts up to twenty washes, and for dripping wet clothes dry, Hang Puff inflatable hangers come in packages of two.

While we're talking laundry, Rowenta offered me two options for battling post-wash wrinkles. The Steam 'n Press Steambrush has a fabric brush and lint pad on a removable soleplate and an iron press underneath. It's okay for home use, but eats valuable packing space and weighs way more than their own Latitude Travel Iron, which includes steam features and is about half the size. Ironing one's hair hasn't been popular for decades and blow drying laundry never was, yet there's Brookstone's 2-in-1 Hair Dryer/Iron—a travel geek's dream. Like all multifunction products, it's bare bones for each aspect, but it's compact and best of all cute! For the wet-headed non-ironer, Conair was kind enough to show me their Travel Hair Dryer. This palm-sized featherweight powerhouse runs 1875 watts and features a folding handle, two speeds and a cool button. I like it so much it's replaced my home dryer.

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

Unfortunately, the answer isn't always "pleasure." The Deuce Deuce toppled when I packed my laptop in the front. Since we're limited to two carry-ons including computer or purse, I turned to the Case Logic Neoprene Computer Sleeve, a strapped no-nonsense case made of wetsuit material you can carry separately then shove safely in your main bag long enough to appease security.

If you're packing a computer case anyway and need a printer, the Canon BJC-55 will easily fit the bill and into your bag. This bubble jet printer comes with different cartridge cradles for a three-color/mini-black combo and a larger all-black. Between rationing ink and single feed paper insertion, you don't want to print a Ph.D. dissertation on this thing... but you could. The

quality is as good as any basic printer. Adding an IS-12 Color Image Scanner Cartridge also turns the BJC-55 into a decent scanner. While we're indulging laptop luxuries, the Targus USB PS/2 Optical Mini Mouse first appealed to me when I wanted to travel without abandoning Gabriel Knight III mid-game. At less than 4", it's got everything a normal mouse has except a sticky tracking ball.

