

Word of mouth

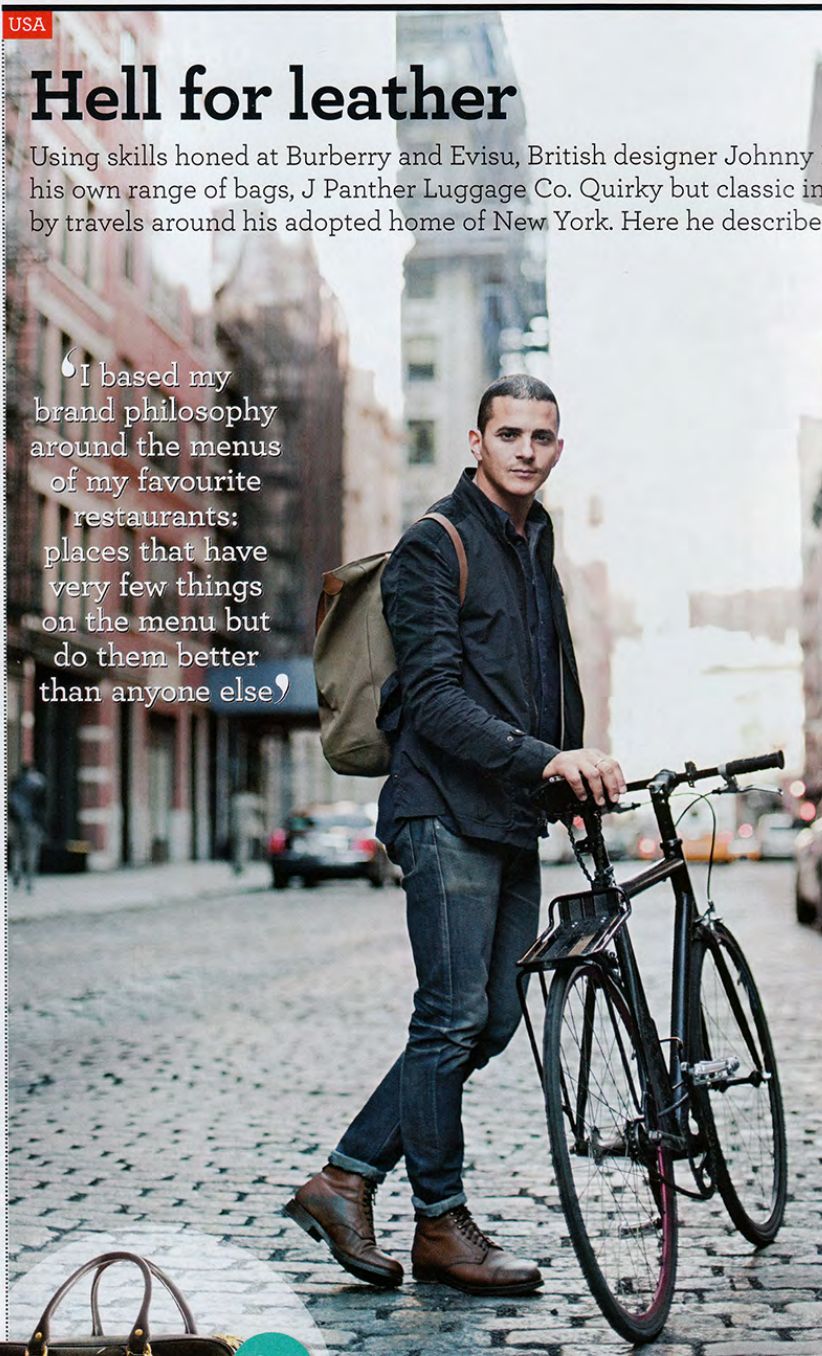


USA

Hell for leather

Using skills honed at Burberry and Evisu, British designer Johnny Diamandis has created his own range of bags, J Panther Luggage Co. Quirky but classic in style, they are inspired by travels around his adopted home of New York. Here he describes an ideal day out

‘I based my brand philosophy around the menus of my favourite restaurants: places that have very few things on the menu but do them better than anyone else.’



Our pick

We love J Panther's **Perfect Weekender**, which has multiple compartments and is small enough to use as carry-on luggage. It is hand-made in Connecticut and perfectly captures the current trend for pared-down style.

\$1,490; www.jpantherluggage.com

A DAY IN...

The East Village

> **7AM** Cycling up the **East River Park** path as the sun comes up is a great start to the day.

> **10AM** **Flea Market** (131 Avenue A) is a small café with a friendly vibe, serving classics like eggs Benedict. Over the road is **Tompkins Square Park**, a wonderful place to witness the changing seasons. I once saw a red-tailed hawk tearing flesh from a dead rat, so it reminds you of nature, too.

> **1PM** I often go to the **Union Square Farmers' Market** to buy whatever's in season and then wander up to **Stock Vintage** (143 East 13th Street), which sells menswear and accessories. I love the way things were made in the pre-1960s golden era of manufacture (it inspired my luggage range) and this shop is like a museum to me.

> **5PM** The **Russian & Turkish Baths** (268 East 10th Street) are kind of shabby, but the hot rooms are superb and there's always a great mix of people, from scowling old East Villagers to hipster couples.

> **7PM** **Shabu-Tatsu** (216 East 10th Street) is my favourite place on a cold night. It serves Japanese *shabu-shabu* food, which is cooked in boiling broth at your table.

> **9PM** Watching a gig at the **Bowery Ballroom** (www.boweryballroom.com) leaves you awestruck because you're at a place where some great legends first performed. The gigs are brilliant even if you don't dig the band.

PHOTOGRAPH: RAYMOND PATRICK