Word of mouth

Hell for leather

Using skills honed at Burberry and Eviau, 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.

A DAY IN...
The East Village

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-Tanu (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.

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 handmade in Connecticut and perfectly captures the current trend for pared-down style.

$1,490: www.jpantlerluggage.com