

# Tops with the Shops

What are the biggest trends, cleverest accessories, and most outstanding luggage collections, according to our retailers? This year at The Show the theme was options – and creativity. From the popularity of trunk-style luggage to the minimalist packing products inspired by budget airlines, read on for our shops' top picks for best travel gear of 2019. While manufacturers develop, suppliers forecast and journalists report, buyers always have the last word.

By Sara Ecclesine



## Lisa Legault

Manager, Facilities & Distribution Facilities  
CAA North & East,  
Ottawa, ON

CAA is known for roadside assistance, but we are so much more. We have a huge travel consultancy department and eight retail stores in our region, covering all necessary travel needs for our customers' upcoming trips. Our travel planning services plus our travel goods retail stores equals one-stop shopping for our clientele.

This year was my first year at The Show, as I just recently assumed responsibility for the merchandising department of CAA North & East. We are very impressed by the Sphynx All-in-One Portable Razor. It's innovative, compact and cute! With all the security restrictions for carry-on luggage, it's a big deal that the Sphynx is TSA-compliant. Rollasole was another favorite; we were impressed with their collection of stylish, compact footwear.

A big complaint we receive from our customers was additional baggage fees, so carry-on is the current trend. Lewis N. Clark had fantastic packable security backpacks for our millennial customers, in a great variety of colors.



## Shatazia Cole

Buyer  
Phoenix Leather Goods,  
BeltOutlet.com,  
CrookhornDavis.com

This was my first year going to The Travel Goods Show and it was a great experience. Phoenix Leather Goods is an online retailer selling a variety of

travel accessories and luggage to fulfill our customers' traveling needs. We carry products for men, women, and children. With this being my first time attending, there were so many new vendors and items to see! I think ReturnMe Lost and Found had a very good concept. The Travel Mat™ by Thermalay, Cabrelli Group, EazyCushion, and Heys Luggage were some of the many vendors that made a big impression on me at The Show.



## Toby Jones

Manager/Buyer  
Rapp's Luggage,  
Metairie, LA

When Rapp's Luggage was founded 154 years ago, Abraham Lincoln was the sitting president. We tell every customer that comes in here "thanks for shopping local" whether they buy anything or not. It's our philosophy, it's even on our door. We get cards from our customers. They're very loyal. We have people going to Europe for three weeks and they've never been on a plane. And we tell them how to prepare, talk them down from the ledge.

I'm on a mission when I get to The Show. I buy for my customers, and I know what I'm looking for. I think the fashion thing is over. I'm looking for function and value. And now everything that I ordered at The Show is coming in at once! We brought in the Briggs & Riley 27" trunk. When my customers roll they roll; they pack a lot of stuff. I see it as a replacement for the duffle for skiing – it's more refined. I also liked Briggs & Riley's new Rhapsody Collection. I purchased more of the LiteGear Fold & Go Clothing Folder in all three colors. I display Magi's folders on a table with old shirts for demon-

stration. We're having lots of requests for odd-size carry-on pieces for touring, so I also brought in LiteGear's 3-in-1 Gear Bags.

Matador – my gosh. I try almost everything from them and we've been successful. A couple things didn't work, so I sent them back for credit, no problem. This year I love their new coyote color, I can't get enough of it. Tanya Rodriguez of Walter + Ray is a genius. I brought in her InTransit bag last year and they sold immediately. True story: one of my customers had an InTransit bag stolen in Turkey. Police found the bag in a trash can and the secret pocket still had all her money in it. Dan Scully (of Scully) for president. He gets it.

I also love Design Go. They do it right; Cynthia Mitchell is fabulous. This year at The Show I dumped a ton of money on Travelon® and Lewis N. Clark. For L.C. Industries I like the olive instead of the black. Both men and women will wear it. Thule impressed me with their quality, the way their bags function, their pricing, and their 25-year warranty. If I bring on a new luggage line it will be them.



## Gail Normore

Owner/Travel Consultant  
That's the Way Travel,  
Oakley, CA

That's the Way Travel has been providing travel consulting services for 40 years, specializing in families, business meetings, organizations and other large groups. I've been coming to The Show for the last four or five years, I sell travel kits and provide small gifts to my clients. This year the whole Show was very well put together, and I especially liked

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the New Products Pavilion (NPP). The *Travel Goods Product Guide* made it easy because we could look in the book, find it in the NPP and then find the booth.

This year I was impressed by the creativity of the accessory exhibitors. I got a chance to meet the founder of Mixologie. Their scents were very soft and pleasant. I also liked the Smart Blanket from fashion designer Yon Chang of Yon Design. Rollasole had some really cute styles, and Artphere's briefcase backpacks were expensive but so beautiful.



**Cindy Lemcool**

Vice President

Cherry Country  
Café & Gift Shop,  
Traverse City, MI

Cherry Country Café & Gift Shop is the only retail space and café in Cherry Capital Airport, a small regional airport. While our peak season runs from mid-May to mid-September, a lot of locals commute to work out of state, and Interlochen Center for the Arts students fly in and out for school holidays.

At The Show we were looking for a new luggage vendor (our previous vendor went out of business) and we were able to order two new luggage lines. We can't buy a container because we have limited storage space, but we appreciated finding vendors that would do pallets. Because of our shop name and location (check out Traverse City's National Cherry Festival!) we specialize in cherry products. We did find some luggage accessories with cherries, and we ordered the Pocket Socks with cherries. Those are so cool!

**Bernie Schwartz**

Owner

California Luggage, Santa Rosa, CA

California Luggage is on the main street of downtown Santa Rosa, CA. We're in the middle of both wine country and craft beer country, so we see seasonal tourists. Our local market skews a little older, mostly comprised of folks between 45-75, who are often retired, with time and money to travel. We've been at this location for 39 years, and are well-stocked with a diverse collection of travel bags, business bags,

and accessories. We are also members of the National Luggage Dealers Association, which has been really beneficial to us as a small business.

I've attended most shows since 1980, and also attended a few in the 70s. Despite some absentee manufacturers this year, I'm glad I attended, and I'm looking forward to NOLA! One cool item I saw at The Show was the Chargetab, an emergency phone charger which is also recyclable.



**Justin Saad**

Vice President

Luggage World,  
Minneapolis, MN

Luggage World is a friendly, stand-alone brick and mortar store in Minneapolis. Our typical customer is the smart traveler seeking quality luggage and travel accessories. Although this is my third year at The Show, we have been in business over 40 years. One of the ways we have done that is by building strong and enduring long-term relationships with our customers. Many of our customers are repeat customers who have previously purchased from us five to 10 or more years ago.

I always like to see what Briggs & Riley has in store – this year at The Show they impressed me with the new designs from their Torq line and also the Rhapsody line for women. I thought Rollux by Fugu Luggage (the carry-on that expands into a full-size suitcase) was a really clever idea and I enjoyed meeting their team at The Show. In terms of accessories, the one that most caught my eye was The Airhook 2.0 – a simple solution for supporting your smart phone or tablet while on a plane.



**Sharlee Lee**

Co-Owner

Ship to Shore  
Luggage Store,  
Cocoa Beach, FL

Ship to Shore Luggage Store is a customer service-focused luggage store in a busy tourist town. To support our motto "we stand out from the crowd," we offer free laminated luggage tags to everyone

that comes in. We also offer packing demos on Saturdays during peak season (April through August), where we show travelers how to use packing cubes to maximize space in the under-seat luggage that is now popular with budget airlines.

We feature Travelpro®, Delsey, and some budget-friendly bags. Our gift shop consists of tropical-themed jewelry, earrings and necklaces, candles, clutches, and purses.

This is our first year at The Show, and the trend in luggage I believe that will increasingly be in demand is gasket-closure luggage, both for security and keeping items safe and dry.

I love the colors and designs of Heys Luggage, and Go Travel had a really cool display with 3-D advertising. My son traveled abroad last year to Greece, Rome and Romania and sent me pictures of a different application of the same technology with 3-D advertising on buildings. It's really cool and drew a lot of attention, so I'm going to do more research and find something like that for our store.



**Maryana Ivlev**

Founder

Why We Travel,  
Cliffside Park, NJ

Why We Travel is an online travel retailer specializing in travel bags and accessories geared toward eco-conscious travelers. When I browsed the New Products Pavilion I found a lot of products that would work for my business model, especially the HYDAWAY Collapsible Water Bottle with Carbon Filtration and the LiteGear 3-in-1 Gear Bag made of recycled plastic water bottles. I was impressed that LiteGear was able to make a bag that big and light, and it comes in nice colors.

Blisslets Nausea Relief Jewelry is a great idea beautifully executed, as is the Posh Pollution Mask. The masks would be perfect for people who work in an industrial city. And I also like the single-use emergency bags by Potty Packs, which is a veteran-owned business. I asked them about the plastic packaging – they tried to do sustainable packaging but it would get wet. So instead they made it as small as possible – and it's a good price.