

SHOPPING

Packing with confidence, ease is in the bag

I was overcome with a major case of anxiety last week on the way to the airport, and it had nothing to do with security concerns, long lines or missed connections. In fact, I wasn't even the one taking the trip.



ED NAKFOOR

You see, I was driving a friend and her two young daughters to catch a mid-morning flight to Disney World. It was a perfect day for flying and I was a little envious of my friend, having not yet planned a winter getaway myself. At the same time, though, I was relieved I didn't have to concern myself with packing, which is a major thorn in my side.

Whether traveling for business or just some R-and-R, my intent is to pack efficiently, yet I find myself in the same predicament time and again: It's the night before I leave, piles of clothes cover my bed, the luggage waits to be zipped shut, and the ticks of my alarm clock sound louder and louder as if I need another reminder that I'm wasting time. So I've resolved that going for-

ward I'm shedding my baggage—figuratively and literally—with a little help, of course, from some local packing pros.

Get packing

I'll admit I was a little intimidated speaking with Lynn Portnoy. As owner of the women's clothing boutique in Southfield that bears her name, Portnoy is known for her packing prowess of traveling with only one piece of luggage.

I was embarrassed and started to fidget in my chair, especially when she told me she pulls out what she thinks she'll need for a trip and then returns 90 percent of it to the closet.

Portnoy speaks about packing with great confidence and ease,

and has written a series of how-to books—*Going Like Lynn*—devoted to the subject. Although she bills them as "a liberating series of travel guides for women," her advice knows no gender.

For example, packing for Portnoy begins with the type of clothing already at home. She advises lightweight fabrics for layering, neutral colors and subtle patterns.

"You should be able to travel to California and New York in February with basically the same items," she said.

If you think you'll need a sport jacket, wear it, plus any other heavy items, on the plane as these heavy items take up more space for bulkier pieces, like shoes.

Speaking of which, pack two extra pairs in addition to the one you're wearing because in Portnoy's opinion, and mine, "if your feet hurt, trip's over." And don't forget to leave behind those heavy shoes. Better to roll a belt or stuff a pair of socks inside to help the footwarmer keep its shape.

One caveat, though, about shoes. Keep the sneakers at home, Portnoy said, especially when venturing overseas. "To pickpockets, sneakers are a sure sign you're a tourist."

Finally, I asked Portnoy what to pack for a trip of about a week. Her recommendation: "Three pants and six shirts plus a sport coat which should match most of the pant-shirt combina-

tions." She knew I needed some reassurance that this would be enough.

"No one knows you when you're away," she said. "Wear something twice, it doesn't matter. It can always be dry cleaned." As for more formal clothes, it shouldn't be an issue. Besides, the best restaurants in any town hardly require a jacket or tie anymore.

Carry on

The key then to successful packing is common sense. And the perfect carry-on combines the right dose of style, durability and great functionality. At the Tumi store at Somerset Collection, I struck gold.

For the uninitiated, Tumi is a

nothing less than a complete packing system.

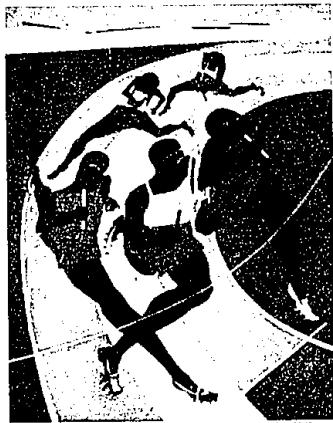
Since 1975, Tumi has been designing luggage, daypacks, handbags and travel accessories known for their patented, durable fabrics, modern styling and special touches like magnetic closures in lieu of cumbersome snaps or buckles, and a serial number registration system to help reunite owner with lost baggage.

Store manager David Poppe said most of what I liked would fit within the airlines' carry-on size limit of 22 by 14 by 9 inches.

The Expandable Gentlemen's Duffel does just what the name says and is available either as a

Please see NAKFOOR, B6

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