

Case study

Global travel is a relatively new phenomenon for mankind, but from horse and cart to private jet, we know how to do it in style — largely thanks to the endeavour and prestige of these sumptuous luggage brands

Wool, wood, linen, leather, metal, plastic, fibre composite, nylon, polycarbonate, aluminium and recycled materials; luggage to fit the transportation. Cases once had to be tough to keep contents safe in covered wagons, but today functionality is a given and the focus is on fashion and often minimalism.

As transportation evolved, soft sided suitcases manufactured from polyester prevailed. Then the original 'Halliburton' aluminium travel cases were handmade

Right: Louis Vuitton is the grandfather and grandmother of all things luggage



for the personal use of oil engineer and businessman Erle P. Halliburton in 1938. Nylon and wheels followed post World War II.

With the global luggage market set to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 6.28% in the next three years, Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton (LVMH) and Samsonite International are among those leading the charge.

LOUIS VUITTON

Since the days of chests and trunks, Louis Vuitton has an history ingrained with luggage. Indeed, the trunk-master from France started out with a flat trunk that enabled stacking, rather than the preferred rounded top trunk to allow rain to roll off. His 1858 cases were crafted from grey Trianon canvas making them airtight and lightweight. Almost two decades later he released a version with beige and brown stripes to avoid imitation before creating the Damier Canvas pattern, which bore the 'marque L. Vuitton déposée' that is so famous

today. Patterns, ingenious locking systems and patents evolved and in 1901 Georges Vuitton released the Steamer Bag; today's equivalent cabin luggage. Myriad iterations followed and the statement piece still stands as one of the finest suitcases around the world. In celebration of its 100th anniversary, the iconic brand asked six designers to create original pieces to celebrate the iconic canvas: the Monogram. Helmut Lang created a DJ Vinyl box, Sybilla designed a backpack with built-in umbrella, Romeo Gigli; a pointed hiking bag with leather straps, Manolo Blahnik; an oval-shaped shoe trunk, Isaac Mizrahi; a weekend bag in vinyl and leather, containing a Monogram canvas purse inside and Vivienne Westwood; a 'bustle' bag. The centre-piece of LV's Horizon Collection in collaboration with Marc Newson, a lightweight 4-wheeled carry-on with a completely flat interior thanks to its large external cane, sells for \$5,900 (€5,150) at louisvuitton.com.

SAMSONITE

Founded in Colorado in 1910, Samsonite is synonymous with the kind of durability required to survive life in a land where arid

desert meets river canyons and the Rocky Mountains. The brand that started life as a trademark for a tapered vulcanised fibre suitcase pedalled by luggage salesman Jesse Shwayder is now registered in Luxembourg and listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. The Schwayder family sold up in 1973 and the company passed hands many times before Marcello Bottoli (former chief executive of Louis Vuitton) acquired for \$250m in 2005 to retrieve Samsonite from a long slump. Just two years later finance investor CVC Capital Partners took over for \$1.7b. Today Samsonite is back at the top. The LITE-CUBE DLX is a favourable offering at US\$849 (€750). samsonite.com

RIMOWA

Germany's answer to Louis Vuitton was founded in Cologne in 1898. Originally Görtz & Morszeck, Paul Morszeck's Richard registered the trademark RIMOWA at the Reich Patent Office in Berlin. In a twist of events, a fire devastated its factory in the 1930s, leaving only aluminium so RIMOWA focused ▶





solely on producing metal cases. Three years before World War II broke out, the first suitcases with grooves were produced. Made from duraluminium (an alloy of aluminium and magnesium) the parallel-grooved was used to stabilise the thin aluminium. Now this is the RIMOWA signature, protected as a trademark. Seventy years later the company was still not only relevant, but at the forefront of luggage technology, and at the turn of the millennium it introduced the first polycarbonate cases. In 2017 RIMOWA became LVMH's first German Maison when the multinational conglomerate company acquired an 80% stake for €640m. Boasting partnerships with Lufthansa, Porsche, Fendi, Monocle and Supreme, RIMOWA

Top: Delsey Paris store in Hong Kong Above: Samsonite's Lite-Cube DLX Above Right: Rimowa Right: Samsonite store in Mumbai, India

remains one of the world's most prestigious brands; supported by regular customers Pharrell Williams, Bella Hadid and Gwyneth Paltrow. rimowa.com

DELSEY

In 1946 Émile Delahaye and the Seynhaeve brothers joined forces. Établissements Delahaye, famous for creating cases for cameras, typewriters and record players, to create luggage for a changing world. It was a time for rebuilding and hope, and the French trio wanted to lead the way. As recently as 2010, it celebrated second place in the global luggage market (with only Samsonite



ahead), with an annual turnover of €130m and 400 staff. In early 2015, the company unveiled a prototype 'smart suitcase' named Pluggage. It contains built-in electronic gadgets which communicate with a smartphone app so that the case can weigh

itself, be easily located and locked remotely. It also features a wireless speaker and a phone charger. Onboard detection, internal lighting, flight info, fingerprint ID and trip info are also available for James Bond wannabes. delsey.com

