



OutsideOnline.com

January 16, 2013

Gear Guy: What's the Best Adventure-Ready Business Luggage?

Featuring: Contrail 22" and Contrail Day

Monthly Traffic: 623,300

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/b7qapxs>

Q: WHAT'S THE BEST ADVENTURE-READY BUSINESS LUGGAGE?

I'm going to Hawaii for work, and need travel bags that are business-appropriate but rugged enough to let me explore the island by foot when I get there. Any suggestions?

A: Gone are the days when all luggage was blocky and cumbersome. Many bags now on the market transform from business accessories to day-hiking tools with a few strategically placed zippers or tabs. While they won't replace your backcountry packs, these new bag designs are more than enough to let you squeeze a bit of adventure into a business trip.

We're currently testing one such transformer bag called the **Osprey Contrail 22**, which came out in the fall of 2012, and attaches to a rugged **day-hike pack**. The Contrail is basically a rolling carry-on with a nylon tab that lets you attach an optional backpack to it. Because the Colorado-based Osprey had its start in custom backpacks, the pack isn't just some throwaway idea, but a carefully designed accessory that's burly enough to stand up to whatever you put it through.





A: Even in rolling mode, the Contrail is built for the road. It sits a full inch higher than most rolling luggage we've looked at, so if you're pulling it over gravel or cobblestones, you won't scrape the bottom. There are grab handles on the top and side for lugging it to places where wheels aren't much use. And at 5.9 pounds, it's much lighter than most other carry-on bags on the market. (Compare, for example, with the excellent **TLS** from eBags, which is 7.1 pounds.)

Our favorite parts are the lightweight pouches, made from thin, ripstop tent-like material that detach from the unit. One pouch tames folded dress shirts, socks, and underwear, and then snaps inside the main bag when you're on the road. The other pouch is made to hold wet and dirty clothes, and hangs in the hotel closet until you're ready to approach with due caution.

The bag held up well in our cross-country travels, and its 46-liter capacity held a lot of gear. We were only disappointed by the way the body stayed so rigid that we couldn't pack it flat when empty. We were also surprised that, unlike many 2013 luggage options, the bag doesn't have padded pockets to hold electronics such as a camera, tablet, or laptop. But Osprey addresses those shortcomings with a compatible backpack, reviewed after the jump. (\$299)

A: Though it's sold separately, the **Contrail Day pack** is meant to complement Osprey's **wheeled Contrail bag**. This carry-on-sized 26-liter pack attaches to the Contrail's handle via a discreet flap sewn to the top of the bag. When not in use, the flap attaches to the bag via a set of sewn-in magnets, which keeps it out of the way. We liked the variety of mesh and padded pockets for organizing stuff, with compression pouches on each side for water bottles. There are cushioned slots for an iPad, as well as a laptop up to 17 inches. The only thing we struggled with were the closely-spaced padded shoulder straps, which chafed our neck and shoulders during one hike.

It's also too bad the pack doesn't open flat so you can run the laptop pouch through security on its own; Many new bags do this and it's a win-win for both you and the TSA folks at the airport. Overall, we thought the pack made a great combination with the wheeled Contrail. For business travelers who like to get off the beaten path, it's a worthy accessory. (\$129)

