

Laptop totes that click with style

Your inner style maven doesn't need to settle for a laptop carrying case made with black nylon and industrial straps.

Instead, think cute. Think pink. Think backpack. Think shiny, and thank Kara Buttimer, owner of the Philadelphia-based computer carry-all company, KaraB.

"I used to travel all over the world," said Buttimer, 41, a former marketing director for Limited Corp. "And I said I could either spend a lot of money for a high-end leather bag or I could create something myself that was fashionable and exciting."

KaraB's bags come in two models: a backpack that holds a 15-inch laptop, in colors ranging from basic black to robin's egg blue, for \$85; and an \$80 convertible briefcase that holds a 15-inch computer and comes in faux leather and patent leather in black, brown or hot pink.

Next month, Buttimer plans to introduce a 17-inch convertible briefcase. Both styles will be available in tweed, leopard and mock crocodile.

Buttimer joins Coach, Kate Spade, Christian Dior, and Gucci in the competitive world of fashionable laptop carriers. This fall, Kate Spade will introduce an iPod mini-carrier. These accessory giants are following the lead of smaller, wholesale companies such as New York-based Case

From Phila.'s KaraB, computer carry-alls that are colorful and cute, not black and boring.



Closed and Mobile Edge, which began offering hipper computer bags last year. Theirs also feature Velcro-stripped pockets for cosmetics and cell phones.

KaraB offers her fair share of knickknack holders, including pockets for keys and file folders. KaraB bags are available at Matthew Izzo and Molletta in Center City, as well as Artisans on the Avenue in Chestnut Hill. For more information, visit www.karab.com.

Kara Buttimer with (from left) faux red leather Metro backpack; Biker Messenger tote for 17-inch screen, in brown and black tweed; Metro backpack in faux leopard. All \$80-\$85.

MICHAEL BRYANT / Inquirer Staff Photographer