

# The sky's the limit on these gadgets

Lately, when traveling, I've developed a set procedure after stuffing my overnight bag in an already overloaded compartment.

First, I hunt for the two straps of a seatbelt that just about covers my waist (everyone else is struggling these days, too — come on, all you airlines out there, give us a few more inches!).

It's always hot and stuffy in the cabin and there isn't a seat to be had.

After I immediately reach up for the air knob, and turn it on full force to revive me, I'm at a loss again as to why I got stuck in the middle seat when I specifically asked for an aisle to accommodate my long legs.

After making small talk with my two neighbors, it's time to pull out a copy of Sky Mall on my "cheaper than US Airways" Delta flight connecting me usually in Atlanta to my final destination no matter where it is.

Now those of you who travel a lot like me and fly Delta will immediately know what kind of magazine Sky Mall is, but for those of you who haven't seen a copy, I like to think of Sky Mall as a book filled with a bunch of items to purchase when you have piles and piles of money in the bank and absolutely nothing else in your life that you want to buy except what's on those colorful pages.

Now, granted, there are some mighty wonderful items that I'd love to have if I only had the cash.

The luggage is top of the line and there are some really clever gadgets that you just don't find at Wal-Mart.

But I thought in this column I'd share some whimsical items with you — so, sit



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back, pretend money is no object, and see if any of these items peak your curiosity.

Let's start with "Roomba," the robotic floor vacuum, priced at \$269.95.

This 4 by 13 vacuum runs on two AA batteries, scooping up debris from all your hardwood floors.

New dirt-sensing technology locates and focuses on heavily soiled areas, and it even returns to its charger when its battery runs low!

You can even keep Roomba confined to a single room with an infrared beam.

Can you imagine Roomba in a house with a dog or a cat? How about a crawling baby?

Traveling into the kitchen, there's a stainless steel disk rack at \$95, napkin holder at \$59 and matching paper towel holder at \$59.

On the kitchen counter is a wireless weather forecaster with a screen that shows pictures of rain, sun, snow, etc. It works 24/7 providing temperature and humidity with a 300-foot range and a forecast capability of 12 to 24 hours ahead.

This runs for \$199, as opposed to the \$4.99 thermometer my husband relies on that sits outside on our porch.

I'm sure you all have a cordless phone, but the Ultimate Phone seems to have it all. Priced at \$169, aside from caller ID and a 40-number memory, it also has a stereo CD player with an AM/FM radio and dual alarms.

For those of you who enjoy popcorn with your movie, how about the movie-style

popcorn popper with a cart like you usually see at your local movie theater?

It produces six quarts of popcorn in just three minutes and runs for \$1,595. And what better way to watch that movie than in a Real Pro Massage Chair that does everything to ease your mind and muscles — except when you're handed its \$3,499 bill.

Now there are also some items that are expensive, but dear to a collector's heart. There's the 500 Home Run Club Baseball signed by 11 legend players like Mickey Mantle, Hank Aaron and Ted Williams.

It runs for \$699. Or you may just want the Joe DiMaggio limited edition signed picture ball for \$399. And for you NASCAR fans, there's a trackside scanner for \$169.95

To get to sleep when your mind just won't shut off, there's the Sound Therapy Relaxation System that plays sounds of rainfall, the ocean, a cascading waterfall, songbirds, a running stream or something they call "white noise," all for \$40. Frankly, all that running water would send me into the bathroom numerous times before I nodded off.

For the busy executive, there's the watch storage box that enables one to store 24 watches at a price of \$79.95. Do you know anyone that has close to 24 watches?

An item that I can't quite make up my mind about is the coffee table aquarium. Yes, it's a coffee table for your living room that houses fish, and the price starts at \$529.95. It's a cool idea, but I have a feeling it would drive my cat crazy.

One item that I just can't figure out why anyone would want it is the life-size World

War I Propeller.

It's a replica of the propellers used during the First World War and it mentions "leaning it in the corner or mounting it above your fireplace."

Somehow a propeller over the fireplace just doesn't do it for me, especially at the dear price of \$140.

Right up there after the propeller is "Mombassa, the Garden Giraffe," an 8-foot-tall sculpture of a giraffe made out of resin, retailing at \$895 with a freight charge of \$79. The ad for this item starts out, "If you really want your garden to be noticed....," and I must admit that having an 8 foot giraffe in any back yard would get you noticed by your neighbors, but perhaps not in the way you originally intended to be noticed.

This is a far cry from those \$1.50 pink flamingoes with twirling arms that you see occasionally gracing your neighbor's front lawn, but I have a feeling they both produce exactly the same effect.

And last but not least, for those who just can't get enough of King Tut, there's a life-size sarcophagus cabinet retailing at \$895.

Yes, it's a replica of Tut's tomb, over 6 feet tall, that opens up to reveal 14 storage shelves.

There's also a matching throne chair for another \$895 made out of resin with hand-painted Egyptian scenes, but you can save a whole \$50 if you order a pair of them.

That may be a bargain to some, but I'm still trying to figure out what to store in a sarcophagus.

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