



HANDMADE

## Federico Polidori Leather Goods

Rome's premier leather artisan for 30 years, Polidori crafts one-off everything, from luggage to holsters, in his dusky little wood-paneled *bottega* a few blocks from the Pantheon. You might find him there hand-stitching a monogrammed rifle case for an Italian aristocrat or interlacing fine Tuscan hide to make a weekend bag. He can do anything a client asks, but left to his own devices, he comes up with pieces heavily influenced by the American West—a passion he's had since childhood, fueled by tales of his saddler grandfather's adventures with Italy's *butteri*, the cowboys of the Maremma (southern Tuscany). When Carl Bernstein was in Rome researching his

biography of Pope John Paul II, he ordered on impulse a briefcase in the shop's window but requested extra pockets for shirts and toiletries for short trips; Polidori's experience making saddles inspired him to add handsome removable leather-trimmed canvas saddlebags over the briefcase handle. Polidori bags improve with age, the natural color of the hide becoming softer and mellower like a great Brunello di Montalcino. For all his artistry, Polidori has never learned to operate a credit card terminal: He lets American clients wire him payment after they receive their order by courier. —MIMI MURPHY

Briefcase, \$5,808. 39-06-679-7191