

THESE BOOTS

aren't made for walking

Entrepreneur Caroline Horner will have more than 1000 units of her ski boot luggage design for sale in retailers in Australia and the US later this month.

ON a shoestring budget of \$100,000 after "mortgaging the house to the hilt" the avid skier sought to design and manufacture a smarter alternative to the traditional and often cumbersome ski boot bag.

The result is the Skboot Bag. Horner hatched the concept after traversing the globe having to cart her boots from airports to the slopes and back.

"It is something that I have been doing in my own, it's my baby," says Horner, whose family owns the popular Sorrento Bakery.

"I have been trying to keep it small and do it the right way. We had so many prototypes made before we got the right one.

"Big companies can do it on a grand scale but they have a lot of money. One thing I have learned is that you can't think about the possible problems you will come across. You have to back yourself; it's possible to follow your dreams. I would hate to be on my deathbed and knowing that I didn't at least try to follow it through."

Designed by Daniel Stewart, the product is now stocked in Snowbiz stores on the Gold Coast and in Sydney and is manufactured in China.

"Travelling with a suitcase, carry-on luggage, handbag and ski boots in the boot bags that were available was physically impossible," says Horner.

"I knew what I wanted – a ski boot bag on wheels that was smart, practical and looked good, which would fit not only my ski boots, but my ski clothing, accessories – and my laptop as well.

"I wanted a bag that kept all my gear together, was easy to travel with, and in the off-season, could be used as a storage facility to keep my ski gear in the one place or just a great weekender."

The bag was launched to the industry early this year at the SIA Snow Show in Denver, Colorado and was an instant success.

It comes in two sizes and features six storage compartments including a main ski boot storage zone, two side pockets, a removable padded laptop/document sleeve, fur lined goggle pouch and a removable wet storage bag with carry straps.

Horner points out that the sophisticated design is also on wheels, which means skiers and snowboarders can be ready for a quick getaway when fresh powder beckons.

