



**Hours of
Enjoyment**
This simple
gift offers
utility times 12
D2

OFF DUTY

**Kooky
Cruiser**
An electric
motorbike that
looks slightly
insane **D13**



FASHION | FOOD | DESIGN | TRAVEL | GEAR

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Saturday/Sunday, November 23 - 24, 2019 | **D1**

THE OFF DUTY 50 HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

The 2 Ways Of Christmas

**The Practical
Approach**
Handsome
sensible
presents

**The Frivolous
Approach**
Gifts
one would
never buy
oneself

Functional vs. fun? That's the question when buying loved ones holiday gifts. Our considered answer: this guide to the best of both

Inside



SEASONINGS GREETINGS

No one would mistake this salt-and-pepper set as merely useful **D10**



A PRUDENT WAY TO FLEE

Gift your spouse an escape to Alaska: Summer cruises are bargains now **D4**



WHIMSICAL WICK

For impish recipients: a candle with a merry-go-round on top **D3**



THE CROWN TOOLS

Practicality meets luxury in this handyman's fantasy **D12**

GEAR & GADGETS



FLYING DOWN THE ROAD
The Aviator can soar from 0-60 mph in about 5 seconds, but those inside its quiet cabin will barely notice.

LINCOLN

RUMBLE SEAT / DAN NEIL



2020 Lincoln Aviator: The Wind Beneath Ford’s Wings

THE NEW AVIATOR SUV is the first Lincoln I’ve tested in almost three years. I took a break from Ford’s premium division because, well, I just couldn’t bear to say the same things over again, couldn’t bear to hear the company’s return-to-greatness spiel another year. Oy. Notwithstanding the marketing department’s dilations on New American Luxury, I came to understand Ford’s management would never OK the kind of vehicle program costs necessary for its premium division to achieve parity with high-end European brands. I mean, they never have before.

But the Aviator—a mid-to-large, three-row SUV, sharing mechanicals with the Ford Explorer—is really good, and really smart, full of design equity and trading in subtleties that I frankly considered beyond Dearborn’s ken. For one thing, the Aviator dares to feel like something. Vehicle program engineers make thousands of choices, which rather quickly boil down in the process to a few defining trade-offs of character: Power vs. weight/efficiency; road/wheel clearances vs. styling/aero; ride vs. handling; and cost vs. everything. That is why, if you are out there

comparison driving, everything sort of feels the same, delivering roughly the same performance, capacity and efficiency, all dialed in toward a numbing nominality. The Aviator’s tuning is definitely its own thing. Starting with the name, the design team chose to work around the metaphors of “sanctuary” and “quiet flight,” with its connotations of exclusive air travel. In past years I would have dismissed such rhetoric as the same old balloon juice but, no, it appears the Aviator team did try to engineer toward this imagery. I think that’s beautiful.

The Aviator turns the quiet up to 11, with soundproofing materials in every cranny of the unit-body, lots more than for Explorer; acoustically laminated windshield and windows; a double-layered firewall separating the engine compartment and cabin; and a 360-degree seal around the hood, like Tupperware. Whatever acoustic radiations make it past all that get squashed by the active noise cancellation system. All of which brought me to the moment when I was driving down a highway in the rain at 70 mph and our Aviator Grand Touring’s cabin was uncannily, reverentially hushed—the hiss of the tires, the patter of raindrops, the wind slipping past the outside mirrors. I mean, should I light a candle? Well, you say, don’t all premium luxury car makers have advanced NVH (Noise-Vibration-Harshness) programs? Yes, but the Aviator’s design team went way the hell overboard in what I see as a valiant effort to create *something*—a spark, a delight, a memorable brand experience, a bid for luxury legitimacy. Like the man said, If you don’t stand for something you’ll fall for anything. Among the quantities traded off are weight, dynamics and efficiency: the V6/AWD version of Avia-

tor tips the scales at 4,892 pounds and gets a mere 20 mpg, combined EPA. Our plug-in hybrid tester weighs 5,673 pounds, before options. Mass optimization was evidently low on the to-do list. The Aviator starts At \$51,100 (Standard) with a turbocharged 3.0-liter, 400-hp V6, 10-speed transmission, and rear-wheel drive. Our tes-

The Aviator’s engineers said they ‘curated’ a sense of gliding, a serene ride, stable and free of turbulence.

ter (\$87,800) descended from trim-walk Olympus: the Black Label Grand Touring augments the V6 and AWD with a 75 kW electric motor integrated into the transmission housing, and a 13.6 kWh battery elsewhere hidden. The Black Label includes a bounty of luxe-y goodies, including the 30-way adjustable front seats/electro-couches. Choices: In daily driving, the plug-in hybrid system is less about increasing efficiency than about adding performance, civilizing it, with the instant torque richness of electrics. With 494 hp in velvet harness, and 630 lb-ft at the wheels, the Aviator Grand Touring quietly storms to 60 mph in the low 5 seconds. In town, the Aviator is able to ease around on its brief bolus of electrons, up to 18 miles. Unlike other systems, the Pure EV mode locks out the internal combustion engine until all the e-beans are gone.

The other experiential that Lincoln’s engineers said they “curated” for the Aviator is a sense of gliding, a turbulence-free ride quality. To that end, the Grand Touring’s suspension is fitted with high-end air springs and real-time adaptive dampers. The suspension is even wired into a forward-facing camera that looks for frost heaves and chuck holes that might perturb the ride and softens accordingly. Some trade-offs came with trade-offs: For all the fussing over ride quality, it was only cosmetics that compelled the use of 22-inch wheels, which can rattle and harshly rebound over poor pavement at low speed, no matter how many pillows are behind the wheels. It’s a handsome beast, isn’t it? Although it does seem to fit a bit too comfortably in Range Rover designer’s Gerry McGovern’s waistcoat. And there are literally grace notes. The door chime is a brief pizzicato recorded by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. The drive selector is a row of handsome keys. The Aviator is so promising for the brand that I hate tallying up grievances. But I will. The hybrid powertrain reflexes are, as yet, clunky and uncoordinated, and the brakes feel weird. Our early tester has a couple exterior trim pieces just a hair off alignment. An interior floor trim panel was catching shoes. The speed-sensing windshield wipers had a hiccup. But it feels like something, for the first time, in a long time.



2020 LINCOLN AVIATOR BLACK LABEL GRAND TOURING
Base Price \$68,800 (Grand Touring)
Price, as Tested \$87,800
Powertrain Plug-in electric hybrid propulsion system, with twin-turbocharged 3.0-liter DOHC V6 gas engine; 10-speed automatic transmission with integrated motor assist; 13.6-kWh lithium battery pack
Power/Torque 494 hp/630 lb-ft of torque
Length/Width/Height/Wheelbase 199.3/89.9 (mirrors)/69.8/119.1 inches
Curb Weight 5,673 pounds
0-60 mph 5 seconds
All-Electric Range 18 miles

THIS YEAR, INSTEAD of accepting my inevitable winter metamorphosis from cheery human into a sloth-like version of myself, I tried to outsmart the snap back to standard time with a new “SAD” lamp. These super-bright lights have traditionally been used to treat the roughly 10 million Americans clinically diagnosed with seasonal affective disorder (SAD). But the lamps, which are thought to simulate sunlight to release serotonin and decrease drowsiness-inducing melatonin in the brain, can also boost the mood of those who experience the milder symptoms of “winter blues”: apathy, lethargy, a suddenly shaky relationship with levity. That’s provided you turn them on, of course, which I often did not. I tended to stash my bulky, clunky lamp—which clashed with my otherwise grandma-chic décor—under my bed next to suitcases and pre-war dust. Recently, however, a new generation of sleek, compact SAD lamps has emerged targeting glum sorts who have small spaces and exacting aesthetics. These attractive alternatives claim to satisfy the brilliant 10,000 lux requirement that has become the standard. The Lattis Therapy Lamp’s stacked rectangles would look right at home among mid-century modern furniture (\$75, [circadianoptics.com](#)). Meanwhile, Willow & Stump’s Perk Lamp, made

Gloom With a View

Light-therapy lamps can zap winter blues. And now they needn’t be ugly

CHIC CHEERER-UPPERS Once, most ‘SAD’ lamps were unavoidably bulky and not much to look at. These days, you can find smaller, more elegant options. From left: Lattis Therapy Lamp, \$75, [circadianoptics.com](#); Northern Light Technologies’s Luxor Therapy Desk Lamp, \$179, [northernlighttechnologies.com](#); Willow & Stump Perk Lamp, \$245, [uncommongoods.com](#), Philips SmartSleep Sleep and Wake Up Light, \$220, [philips.com](#)

from upscale corian quartz and oak, mimics a round makeup mirror and tilts up or down to direct its rays (\$245, [uncommongoods.com](#)). And Northern Light Technologies’s Luxor Therapy Desk Lamp features three bright and large triangular panels that spread their glow so you don’t have to sit so close to it (\$179, [northernlighttechnologies.com](#)). These lamps can also help adjust the circadian rhythms of bodies suffering from sleep disorders or jet lag, according to the Mayo Clinic. So even if the smart, donut-shaped Philips Sleep and Wake Up Light (\$220, [philips.com](#)) doesn’t meet the 10,000 lux standard, it can still help those who struggle to wake up come December by gradually brightening on the days when the sun isn’t doing the job. Plus, it doubles as an alarm via SleepMapper’s iPhone app. Light therapy is generally most effective soon after you wake for 30 minutes or so, said Dr. Norman Rosenthal, the psychiatrist who pioneered the treatment. But those who experience malaise as the sun dips around 4 p.m. may consider stationing an extra light in their cubicles for an afternoon pick-me-up. A word of caution: If you do introduce such a lamp into your workspace, position it strategically—or risk vexing colleagues who didn’t sign up for a dose of light therapy. —Rachel Wolfe

PHOTO: MARTIN RAMIN/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL. STYLING BY ANNIE CARDENAS