

BEST TECH \$10 TO \$10,000,000 gadget

PRESENTED BY **LAPTOP**
THE PULSE OF MOBILE TECH

339 GREAT GIFTS



**TOP TECH TOYS
FLYING SUPER
GROVER 2.0**
p. 116



Special Issue
Display Until Jan. 30, 2013
laptopmag.com

gadget

150 Fifth Avenue, 9th Floor, New York, NY 10011
(212) 703-5809 Fax: (212) 703-5801
www.laptopmag.com

CONTACT US
GENERAL: questions@laptopmag.com
ADVICE: helpme@laptopmag.com
FACEBOOK: facebook.com/laptopmag
TWITTER: @laptopmag

TO SUBSCRIBE
LAPTOP Magazine is available in print, digital and iPad formats.

PRINT
1 year, 12 issues, \$14.99 at
www.laptopmag.com/subscribe
DIGITAL
1 year, 12 issues (plus 3 bonus issues), \$9.99 at
www.laptopmag.com/digital

iPAD APP
1 app (free), each issue sold separately, single issue (\$3.99) or a 1-year, 12-issue subscription (\$9.99) at
itunes.apple.com

NEWSLETTERS
Weekly email newsletters, free at
www.laptopmag.com/newsletter.aspx

Published by
tech media
NETWORK

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Jerry Ropelato
PRESIDENT Stan Bassett
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER Randall Bambrough
CHIEF REVENUE OFFICER Mark Westlake
CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER Robert Roy Britt
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER Gerald Nichols
CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER DeLonie Call
CHIEF TRAFFIC OFFICER Kurt Tietjen
VICE PRESIDENT BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT Michael Eitzroth
VICE PRESIDENT CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT Jared Page
VICE PRESIDENT SALES Gary Strauss

PUBLISHER
Edward D. Brown
ebrown@laptopmag.com
EDITOR IN CHIEF
Mark Spoonauer
mspoonauer@laptopmag.com

GADGET EDITORIAL DIRECTOR Eamon Hickey
ONLINE EDITORIAL DIRECTOR Avram Piltch apiltch@laptopmag.com
MANAGING EDITOR Anna Attkisson aattkisson@laptopmag.com
REVIEWS EDITOR Michael A. Prospero mprospero@laptopmag.com
ASSISTANT REVIEWS EDITOR David Eitelbach deitelbach@laptopmag.com
STAFF WRITERS Daniel Berg dberg@laptopmag.com
Daniel P. Howley dhowley@laptopmag.com
Konrad Kravczyk kkravczyk@laptopmag.com
Sherri L. Smith ssmith@laptopmag.com

WEB PRODUCER/WRITERS Kenneth Butler kbutter@laptopmag.com
Chao Li cli@laptopmag.com
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT Molly Klinefelter mklinefelter@laptopmag.com

CONTRIBUTORS
Aimee Baldrige, Matt Bertz, Kris Cain, Brad Chacos, Barbara E. Hernandez, Mike Kobrin, Michael Lasky, Owen W. Linzmayer, Laura Neilson, John Quain, Oliver Renick, Stewart Wolpin

ART & PRODUCTION
DESIGN DIRECTOR Jeff W. Sass
ART DIRECTION Michael Blea, William Plummer
PRODUCTION MANAGER Greg Barone
INTERACTIVE/PRINT PHOTOGRAPHER Jeremy Lips
INFORMATIONAL GRAPHICS ARTIST Karl Tate
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER Dave Brody

ADVERTISING
(advertising@techmedianetwork.com)
NATIONAL PRINT SALES MANAGER Ann Cannon acannon@laptopmag.com; (212) 703-5810
SENIOR ACCOUNT DIRECTOR Brian Moles bmoles@techmedianetwork.com; (212) 703-5804
EAST COAST SALES DIRECTOR Tom Rudd trudd@techmedianetwork.com; (212) 703-5820
WEST COAST SALES DIRECTOR Joe Ward jward@techmedianetwork.com; (323) 257-2457
WEST COAST SALES MANAGERS Nicola Galassi ngalassi@techmedianetwork.com; (310) 849-4998
Mark Cosby mcosby@techmedianetwork.com; (310) 221-1350
MIDWEST SALES DIRECTORS Barry H. Weinberg bweinberg@techmedianetwork.com; (847) 955-0847
Alexandra Nordlinger anordlinger@techmedianetwork.com; (312) 623-6766
DETROIT SALES REPRESENTATIVE Calvin Moore cmoores@techmedianetwork.com; (248) 258-5674
DIRECTOR OF CIRCULATION Michael Gerardo
ACCOUNTING MANAGER Jim Cruz
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER Becky Snyder
OFFICE MANAGER Jeannie Mitchell

Volume XXXII, Issue #12, (S.C. 407) 2012 copyright.
LAPTOP (ISSN: 1089-36x) is published monthly (12 issues per year), plus 1 special issue by TechMediaNetwork, 150 Fifth Avenue, 9th floor, New York, NY 10011.
Edward D. Brown, Publisher.
Subscriptions are available for \$14.99 per year (\$30 for foreign subscriptions) for 12 issues from LAPTOP, P.O. Box 344, Oregon, IL 61061-0344; call (815) 732-5289 within the U.S.; or call (877) 572-8655 from outside the U.S. Periodicals postage paid at Oregon, IL, and additional mailing offices.
POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to LAPTOP, P.O. Box 344, Oregon, IL 61061-0344.
Address all editorial correspondence to the editor at LAPTOP, c/o TechMediaNetwork, 150 Fifth Avenue, 9th floor, New York, NY 10011 (212-703-5800). Unacceptable manuscripts will be returned if accompanied by sufficient first-class postage. TechMediaNetwork is not responsible for lost manuscripts or photos. This publication is copyrighted and may not be reproduced in whole or in part by mimeograph or by other means without permission of the publisher.
LAPTOP and TechMediaNetwork have made every attempt to verify the accuracy of product and pricing information obtained from manufacturers and/or their agents appearing in this issue. However, LAPTOP and TechMediaNetwork do not assume any responsibility for the accuracy of said information.
Printed in U.S.A.

For licensing and reprints of LAPTOP content, contact Wright's Reprints at (877) 652-5295. **WRIGHT'S MEDIA**

gadget HOLIDAY 2012 CONTENTS

gadget HOLIDAY 2012 CONTENTS (cont.)



FEATURES

12 25 Gadget Gifts Under \$50

Holiday shopping need not be hard on your wallet.

18 All For One: Group Gifting

With one of these collective gift sites, you can all chip in on that high-ticket item.

20 Made For Millionaires

Think way beyond the ordinary for the super-wealthy.

22 Geek Their Ride

High-tech upgrades to make their car smarter.

26 PERSONALITY: Gardeners Dig Digital

28 Extreme Home Geek-Over

Help your loved one accessorize their abode.

30 The Gift of Wacky

Behold the ultimate oddball gizmos.

32 For the Love of Fido

The best ways to spoil your furry best friend this holiday.

34 Get Fit

Help them stay healthy — and have more fun doing it.

38 PERSONALITY: Outdoorsperson Picks

39 Killer Kickstarter Gadgets

Invest in American innovation and give a unique gift simultaneously.

40 Robots Among Us

Amazing machines that are (almost) ready to replace you.

42 PERSONALITY: Geeked-Out Gifts



44 TABLETS

Tablets For All	46
PERSONALITY: A Chef Dishes	50
Essential Tablet Accessories	52
On the Case	54
Android Tablets For Kids	56
E-Readers & E-Books	58

88 CAMERAS

DSLRs: Serious Shooters	90
Compact System Cameras	92
PERSONALITY: Road Warrior Picks	93
Killer Point & Shoots	94

62 NOTEBOOKS

Windows 8 Explosion	64
Perfect PC Peripherals	68
Which MacBook is Right For You?	70
Schlep It In Style	72
PERSONALITY: Fashionista Faves	76

96 AUDIO

Rock the House, Lose the Wires	98
Headphone Heaven	100
PERSONALITY: Jazzy Musician Gifts	102
Raising the (Sound) Bar	104

78 SMARTPHONES

What's the Plan?	80
Top 10 Smartphone Gifts	82
Shield It: Top iPhone 5 Cases	85
Smart Watch This!	86

106 HOME ENTERTAINMENT

Top 5 Smart TVs	108
PERSONALITY: Sports Fan Winners	110
Just Stream It	112
Must-Have Movie Gifts	114
Tech Toys For All Ages	116

118 GAMING

Mobile Games Worth Gifting	120
Control Freak: Mobile Add-ons	122
Choose Your Weapon: Consoles	123
The Games To Get	126

128 Give Back

Gift and do good with these green and socially conscious ideas.

25 GADGET GIFTS UNDER \$50

Give everyone something cool without breaking the bank.

by Stewart Wolpin



Audi R8 Remote Control Car

If you can't afford a real Audi for your kid, you can quell his automotive urges with this radio-controlled, battery-powered Audi R8 V10. It's scaled 1:24, comes in blue or red and needs one 9-volt battery for the car and three AAA batteries for the remote control. But you know you're just delaying the inevitable, right?

\$39; www.audi-collection.com

Ballistic SG Series Samsung Galaxy S 3 Case

Four layers — a molded screen protector, a shock-absorbent polymer, an impact-resistant polycarbonate shell and soft silicone with reinforced corners — protect her Samsung Galaxy S III. Plus, its lay-on-table feature means her screen won't touch a surface if she places it face-down.

\$49.99; www.goballisticcase.com



Belkin LiveAction Camera Remote Control

The iPhone doesn't have a self-timer, so selfies can be shot only at arm's length. This remote-control-plus app solves the self-portrait problem. Load the LiveAction app, pair the remote to the app via Bluetooth, attach the adjustable kickstand, then remotely shoot a video or still of yourself from up to 30 feet away.

\$49.99; www.belkin.com



BioLogic Smartphone Bike Mount

This weatherproof hard-shell case with a touch-screen membrane mounts on your bike's handlebars and pivots 360 degrees to show your smartphone screen in either portrait or landscape. An interchangeable inner liner can accommodate most Android models with full button access, and a clear protected opening on the back lets you shoot video or photos while riding.

\$45; www.thinkbiologic.com



Action Shot Wearable Camcorder

Strapping a camcorder to your helmet during action sports is all the rage, and now your extreme sports fan can have one for less than \$50. True, Action Shot captures only DVD-quality 480p video instead of HD, but your youngster will be thrilled to capture and share his X Gamer-in-training adventures.

\$49.99; actionshotcam.com

LESS THAN \$50



Get stellar Black Friday deals.



GET SMARTER

The ultimate guide for gifting a smartphone.

By now you may have heard about the iPhone 5. This holiday season, Apple's svelte but big-screen wonder will propel what's already a staggering number: Nearly 60 percent of all phones sold now are smartphones. But the iPhone 5 is hardly the only exciting device you can give. Samsung has a one-two punch in the Galaxy S III and Note II that give Apple a run for its money, and there are plenty of other awesome alternatives. Here's a quick look at the latest trends and what to look for before you buy.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

SCREEN SIZE

Remember when 4.3 inches was considered the limit of what people would carry? Now you'll find plenty of handsets with 4.7- and 4.8-inch HD screens, which give you more room to surf the Web, watch movies and play games. There's even a 5.5-inch model on the market. Anything above 5 inches might be too much to some, which is why these handsets have taken on the phablet moniker (part phone, part tablet). The iPhone 5's screen is a relatively small 4 inches, but it's easier to use one-handed than larger phones.

YOUR NEXT POINT-AND-SHOOT

It's no longer about megapixel counts but special modes and apps that help you take better pictures and have more fun with them after they're taken. For instance, the Samsung Galaxy S III has a Best Shot mode that snaps a bunch of pics and then lets you choose the one you want. And the iPhone 5 has a sweet new panorama mode for capturing sweeping 28-megapixel landscapes. Also pay close attention to speed; shutter lag is so last year.

CHOOSE YOUR OS

For the last couple of years it's been all about Android and iOS. And that's still pretty much the case. In a nutshell, Apple's iOS remains the easiest operating system to use and has the broadest selection of high-quality apps. iOS 6 adds such welcome new features as turn-by-turn directions, a smarter Siri and a new Passbook feature

for storing everything from coupons and plane tickets in one place.

Android remains the most customizable OS, which means that you can personalize your device with widgets instead of having a static home screen. It also means that smartphone makers can add unique innovations on top of Google's software, such as pen input on the Galaxy Note II. And Android offers a lot more choice in terms of hardware.

Windows Phone 8 is certainly worth considering, especially for first-time smartphone owners. You can now resize the live tiles on the dynamic Start screen and use cool Lens apps to get more out of the camera. Like Android, Windows Phone 8 supports NFC chips so you will be able to pay for stuff with a tap of your phone.

WHAT YOU GET FOR...

LESS THAN \$50

Budget smartphones are jam-packed with all the features they'll need, including 4G LTE speeds, at least a 5-MP camera and a 1-GHz or faster processor. Most value-priced models come with a smaller, lower-resolution screen (3.5 to 4 inches), but you can also find more powerful handsets for loved ones that have been discounted, such as the \$49 LG Lucid for Verizon Wireless.

\$99 TO \$149

The sweet spot for a lot of shoppers includes older superphones at a lower price (such as the iPhone 4S and Samsung Galaxy Nexus). The HTC One X, for example, boasts a super-fast camera, a huge 4.7-inch HD screen and Beats Audio for \$99. You'll also find many phones with slide-out keyboards in this price range (such as the Motorola Droid 4) for the messaging fiend on your list.

\$199 AND UP

The biggest screens, the fastest processors, the sharpest cameras and the most cutting-edge designs. That's what they'll enjoy if you splurge on a premium smartphone, which makes the most sense to us since they'll be living with that device for two years. At \$299, they'll be able to have more capacity for movies, music and more, such as the 32GB Galaxy S III and iPhone 5.

SMARTPHONES

CONTENTS

Carrier Plan Comparison 80

Top Ten Smartphone Gifts 82

iPhone Cases 85

MADE FOR MILLIONAIRES

Restraint is way overrated.

by Aimee Baldrige

CoverBee Diamond Laptop Sleeve

We were skeptical at first about parting with \$11 million for a 13-inch laptop sleeve. But then CoverBee made an excellent point: "This makes sense, because laptops have become a commodity." And it is a thing of beauty to behold: The sleeve is lined with sable and adorned with 8,800 round-cut diamonds of exceedingly high-quality clarity and color. Yes, laptops will come and go, but a diamond laptop sleeve is forever.

\$11,000,000; www.coverbee.com

Virgin Galactic Spaceship Charter

These days, it seems so hard to find a place where you can leave the world behind. Sir Richard Branson feels your pain, and he's providing a new way to get away from it all. Branson has opened up bookings on LauncherOne, Virgin Galactic's new spacecraft. When you opt for the charter package, Virgin will launch you and five of your best friends into space on a private satellite. Exclusivity is guaranteed, and flights are expected to begin in 2015.

\$1,000,000; www.virgingalactic.com

Hart Audio D&W Aural Pleasure Loudspeakers, 18ct Gold

Your favorite audiophile will love this innovative set of speakers housed in solid gold cabinets. We know what you're thinking: Sure, they have that shine I love, but how do they perform? Speakers usually rely on their wood components to lend color to their performance, but by sheathing their drive units in gold instead, Hart gives these speakers an unimpeded clarity that will remind you, once again, that the best things in life are at least \$4 million.

£3,000,000 (\$4,800,000);

www.hartaudio.com



www.laptopmag.com

Leica M9-P Edition Hermès—Série Limitée Jean-Louis Dumas

Leica's "cheap" \$2,000 models might make a nice knockabout shooter, but if you want to really impress them, get this full-frame 18-megapixel range finder with styling by automotive designer Walter de Silva. Limited to an edition of 100, it's finished in silver and ochre Veau Swift calfskin from the house of Hermès, and comes with three lenses. It won't really take better pictures than an \$800 DSLR, but a Bentley won't get the groceries home faster than a Hyundai, either.

\$50,000; www.leica-camera.com

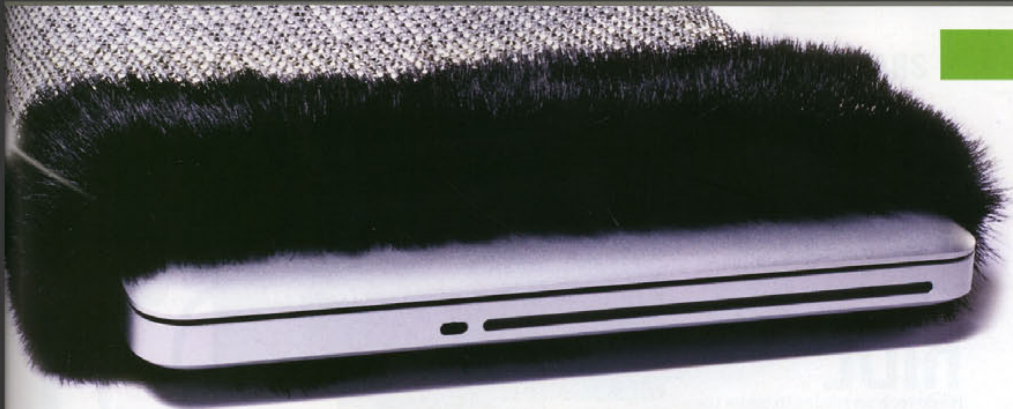


Tesla Model X Signature Performance

Here's a gift that could offset some of those fuel emissions from their private jet. This limited-edition electric SUV combines a sleek design with a roomy six-passenger interior that has a monster-size touch screen. As Tesla puts it, "You can finally live a big-car lifestyle without living at the pump." Without having your chauffeur live at the pump, that is—but we know what they mean. Powered by an 85 kWh battery, the Model X can go from 0 to 60 in 5 seconds. To alight at your destination, simply raise its vertically mounted Falcon Wings. Deliveries begin in 2014, but you can put down a \$40,000 deposit now.

\$97,900; www.tesla.com

www.laptopmag.com



Suidobashi Heavy Industry Kuratas Robot

Kogoro Kurata knows that your favorite billionaire dreams big — as big as a 13-foot boardable robot. "Robot pilot," as the Suidobashi website points out, is "an occupation most men would want to be." Brought to life thanks to Wataru Yoshizaki's V-Sido ("bushido") operating system and powered by a diesel engine, the Kuratas Robot can make you king of the road at a 6.3 mph top speed. You can drive the Kuratas from the cockpit or dismount and command it via smartphone app to perform tasks such as fighting fires with a squirt gun, firing 6,000 BBs per minute with a twin gatling gun, or — and we're not sure they really thought this one through — cleaning house with a mop.

Starting at \$1,353,500; suidobashijuko.jp



GADGET 2012

21

WHAT'S THE PLAN?

Cell Phone Carriers Compared

Molly Klinefelter

Although they're called the Big Four, a better term might be Big Two. AT&T and Verizon currently control more than 70 percent of the U.S. smartphone market. And in the race to roll out 4G LTE, Verizon is winning by a landslide with 337 markets.

Sprint and T-Mobile are scrambling to catch up. T-Mobile has the second largest number of 4G LTE markets, and in the wake of its failed attempt to merge with AT&T, the company is looking to entice customers with new unlimited data plans. (T-Mobile and MetroPCS will wind up as one carrier.) Sprint rolled out its 4G LTE coverage in August, and although it only had five 4G markets as of press time, it announced plans to add 100 more in the next few months.

CHARTING IT

In the chart below, we've figured prices (using a New York zip code) for three different example 4G-capable smartphone users:

Basic individual plan: Enough anytime talk minutes, text allowance, and data usage for most personal and light business use.

Power user individual plan: For people -- especially business users -- who need a lot of daytime talk minutes and a hefty data allowance.

Basic family plan: Sufficient anytime talk minutes and data usage for most families (with 2 or 4 phones).

Note that plan details vary for each carrier, so an exact minute-for-minute comparison isn't possible. All plans include free weekend and nighttime minutes (start and end times vary), and we haven't listed the many special incentives that, like confetti, the carriers shower on potential customers -- unlimited in-network or mobile-to-mobile calling or texting, rollover minutes, and others like them.



CARRIER	PROS	CONS	# OF 4G MARKETS	PLAN	PRICING	DETAILS
Verizon Wireless	Largest number of 4G LTE markets by far; reliable data and voice connectivity; shared data plans useful for individuals or families who want to use single pool for multiple devices	New smartphone customers must choose plan with unlimited talk and text; can't do simultaneous voice and data like AT&T	337	BASIC	\$100/month	unlimited voice & text; 2GB data
				POWER	\$120/month	unlimited voice & text; 6GB data
				FAMILY	(2 phones) \$150/month (4 phones) \$250/month	unlimited voice & text; 4GB shared data unlimited voice & text; 8GB shared data
AT&T	Second greatest number of 4G LTE cities covered; Offers compelling exclusive phones such as HTC One X+ and Nokia Lumia 920; shared data plans good bet for families, including affordable 1GB plan.	Only shared data plans support FaceTime calls over cellular.	51	BASIC	\$89.99/month	450 anytime mins; unlimited text; 3GB data
				POWER	\$125/month	unlimited voice & text; 6GB data
				FAMILY	(2 phones) \$150/month (4 phones) \$240/month	unlimited voice & text; 4GB shared data unlimited voice & text; 10GB shared data
Sprint	Unlimited 4G data plans can save you money versus AT&T and Verizon; Buyback program gives up to \$300 credit towards new phone	Small number of 4G LTE markets for now; AT&T and Verizon offer better smartphone selection	5	BASIC	\$79.99/month	450 anytime mins; unlimited text and data
T-Mobile	Very broad 4G HSPA+ footprint; unlimited data plan options without overages; can save versus AT&T if you bring unlocked iPhone to T-Mobile	Behind the other big three carriers in 4G LTE deployment, some popular phones cost more up front on T-Mobile; doesn't offer iPhone 5	229	BASIC	\$69.98/month	500 anytime mins; unlimited text; 2GB data
				POWER	\$89.98/month	unlimited voice, text, data
				FAMILY	(2 phones) \$140/month (4 phones) \$230/month	1000 anytime mins; unlimited text & data unlimited voice, text & data

No-contract Options Not too keen on signing a contract with a major carrier? Small carriers such as Boost Mobile, Cricket, MetroPCS, U.S. Cellular and Virgin Mobile offer solid smartphone selections with no contract obligations, which can end up saving you hundreds of dollars over the long run. Some standout features: Boost allows users to pay via a Facebook app, U.S. Cellular has a stellar customer service reputation, and Cricket and Virgin offer the iPhone in their lineups.

GIFTS WITH STYLE

A FASHIONISTA'S FAVORITES

by Laura Neilson

FASHIONISTA:

Julie Bensman

Whether interviewing designers and stylists, casting models or producing photo shoots, Julie Bensman has always played a major role in the fashion industry. "I love the excitement and how everything always changes -- you never get bored," she said. These days, Bensman is an editor-at-large for the popular site The Fashion Spot (www.thefashionspot.com), where her "Closed Set" column features interviews with fashion insiders, discussing the latest in style, beauty and fitness.

FAVORITE GADGETS

WeSc Headphones

For navigating the concrete jungle with a soundtrack on constant rotation, Bensman relies on a chic headset that looks as good as it sounds. "These headphones aren't for wallflowers," she said. She wears the x The Standard limited editions. The similarly styled Maracas are available for consumers.

\$80; www.wesc.com



Cole Haan's Linley Tablet Zip Around

Between mobile offices, commuting to appointments and frequent traveling, Bensman needs an iPad case that's compact and durable. This one also gets high marks for style: "It's classic and polished without being boring," she said.

\$118; www.colehaan.com



MORE PICKS

JackGems

Smartphone seeming a little drab? Bling it up with one of these Swarovski crystal-encrusted plugs, created by jewelry designer Kirsten Goede. Available in 10 colors, they fit most (but not all) smartphones with 3.5mm headphone jacks, and you can still talk on the handset with the JackGem installed.

\$26; www.jackgems.com

