

gearbox

Track Home

These items bring the comforts of your crib—and garage—to the circuit.



A good track day will take you out of your comfort zone, but that can also mean going without certain conveniences. Spend a little money, and the products featured here can ease track days' discomforts—if not, alas, their humiliations.

—DAVID GLUCKMAN

Tru-Line TL-12 Portable Laser-Alignment System

Lasers! The Tru-Line alignment system makes possible those last-minute chassis adjustments. It's portable and works on uneven surfaces, allowing you to measure and then mess with toe, camber, caster, and steering-axis inclination. The measurements are easy to read, but make sure you have a shop manual on hand in order to properly affect adjustments. Problem: It's harder to blame the car when you can adjust it on-site. Did we mention the lasers? (\$5495, www.tru-line.net)

ProDryer PD-1250

Sweaty helmets are gross, even if it's your own sweat. The ProDryer aims to expedite the drying process by circulating air through the helmet, much like a fan would. This is because it is, basically, just a fan. ProDryer offers models that use either 12-volt (like the one we tested) or household current. It's small enough to fit on a car seat and works as advertised. (\$70, www.gorac.com)

Cool Shirt for Pit Crews

Cool Shirt was developed to keep surgeons cool under hot OR lights. The simple technology—ice water pumped through tubes sewn into clothing—migrated to racing, where an onboard system keeps the driver's temp clement. This setup gives a crew of between two and six a break, but they must be tethered and stay within a 10-foot radius. The feeling while wearing one of the three shirts that came with our test unit? Like wearing a cooled seat. (\$1879, www.coolshirt.net)



GEARBOX



Generac iX2000

There are generators, and then there are inverter generators like Generac's iX series. It uses a microprocessor to prevent surging and reduce noise inherent in gas generators. So it's cleared for use with delicate electronics. A FlexPower mode reduces fuel consumption for low loads. In addition to this 2000-watt unit, Generac has 800- and 1600-watt models. (\$681, www.generac.com)

Pitmat

A fancy tarp? The Pitmat provides a clean work environment while giving a bit of cushion under feet and knees—especially nice over wet grass or gravel. Seven standard sizes are available, but you can order them in custom dimensions, too; the 10-by-20-foot mat shown here retails for \$239. For an extra charge, the company will apply the logo of your choice. But basically, it's a fancy tarp. (\$239–\$660, www.pitmatusa.com)



BRAWLING HAULERS

We loaded all this gear into two vans—a Nissan NV2500 HD and a Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 2500, both with optional high roofs—and headed to GingerMan Raceway, near South Haven, Michigan, to see how comfortable we could get.

These walk-in shipping containers are great for hauling, but they approach the task differently. The upstart NV, based on the Nissan Titan platform, rightly feels more like a truck than a van. The more refined Sprinter displays Mercedes' experience in the segment; a big-rig seating position and a short nose provide a reassuring view of the road, while the clean switchgear reminds why it costs considerably more than the better equipped Nissan.

There's further evidence of their differing characters under the hoods: Mercedes' tried-and-true diesel V-6 is quiet and eager to assist in passing, while the NV's big-power V-8 helps it win the towing competition—9500 pounds to 5000.

But tow ratings don't matter at the track if you're racing the vans themselves, something we couldn't resist doing. By virtue of the Nissan's higher speed—we hit 110 mph compared with the Sprinter's electronic limit of 82—as well as a hyperactive Mercedes stability system, the NV was a few seconds quicker around the road course. And now you know. —DG

Race Ramps Portable Pit Stop

It's the next best thing to a lift. Put together these puzzle pieces (20 come in the set) the right way, and you can drive a car onto them. They are light but sturdy—the inner foam is the same material used to make roadbeds—and rated to carry up to 6000 pounds. Once you're off the ground, the bridge sections can be removed for more room, and the ramps can be relocated from the rear to the front so you can drive off forward instead of backward. A version is available with cutouts for scales. If you can't swing the \$2570 price tag, Race Ramps also makes plenty of smaller inclined planes and accessories for vehicle-height manipulation. (\$2570, www.raceramps.com)

