

| ROAD TEST |

Safe Rides for Passenger Pups

After two months of being hauled around town and across the country testing out dog seats, harnesses and even goggles, Darwin the beagle is, frankly, so over road trips for now. While the pooch played guinea pig, we learned that there are two categories of dog products for your car: those that take care of your dog and those that take care of your auto. The best products do both: protect your vehicle from muddy paws and restrain your hound from moving around and distracting the driver or getting injured if the car makes an abrupt stop.

John Grieco, owner of G.W. Little, an online retailer that sells dog travel products, says pet car safety is overlooked. "Many people don't think about safety for their pets when they're driving," he says, "but you see it all the time: a car going around a curve, and you can tell in the dog's face, they're just trying to hang on."

Product: Umbra Pet Dog Tent (available at Bailey & Wags, 800-887-5448, www.baileyandwags.com;

\$130-\$160, depending on size)

Driver Says: Well built with heavy-duty nylon, the Italian-made Umbra Pet Dog Tent opens and closes like an umbrella and is water-resistant and lightweight. I set up the tent in the back of a Honda CRV, hooking each corner to rings under the car mat. It didn't shift much, but Darwin, who was untethered, had to brace herself going around turns. The best thing about the tent is its versatility: Your dog gets privacy, shade and security inside the car, and a canine camp outside.

Dog Says: Couldn't care less about the Euro-chic design, but modern-day dens don't get much better than this. It's perfect for what pups do best between supper times: sleep.

Grade: A-



Umbra Pet Dog Tent, available in three sizes.



Microsuede Lookout Car Seat, in herringbone.

Product: Microsuede Lookout Car Seat (G.W. Little, 866-495-4885, www.gwlittle.com;

\$129-\$179, depending on size)

Driver Says: Class all the way. This seat is solid and well made and looks good enough to display in the living room, thanks to its herringbone microsuede, accent piping and matching pillow. The lap seat belt secures the seat, and a short, adjustable strap that attaches to the dog's harness connects to the seat belt. It's wider than the Lookout II (next item), which makes it less tipsy, but it's also a little big for the passenger seat and better for the back seat. Includes a goody drawer underneath.

Dog Says: Throw in a supply of pet snacks and this dog will never covet the driver's seat again.

Grade: A

Product: Metallic Black Racing Doggles (available at G.W. Little, 866-495-4885, www.gwlittle.com;

\$19)

Driver Says: At last, my dream of making my beagle look like the Red Baron has come true. And for the 20 seconds before she pushed the goggles off with her paw, Darwin's big brown eyes were protected from bugs,

Restraining a dog is as easy as fitting your pooch with a harness and an attachment that clips into the seat-belt buckle, which is how Darwin usually travels. She has enough leeway to move around in her seat, but not enough to relocate to the driver's lap. Kelly Connolly, a spokeswoman for the Humane Society of the United States, says restraining your dog with a harness, cargo net or crate is the safest way for a driver and pet to travel. She recommends putting dogs in the back seat, where they are less likely to distract the driver. If they do sit in the front, make sure the passenger air bag is deactivated.

Many of the products we reviewed use the harness-and-seat-belt system, but others don't secure the dog at all. They are merely cosmetic or for the dog's comfort. Here's a look at the items we tested and how they rated.

— Melanie D.G. Kaplan

flying debris and UV rays. For the dog without a mind of her own, Doggles are perfect for convertibles, windy beaches and head-out-the-window drives. Well made, with one adjustable strap under the chin, another under the ears and anti-fog orange lenses.

Dog Says: Loathed them.

Grade: C+

Product: Oversized Lookout II booster seat (J-B Wholesale Pet Supplies, 800-872-6027, www.jbpet.com;

\$89.99, good for 18- to 25-pound dogs); not pictured.

Driver Says: The foam seat has quilted nylon on the outside and lambswool inside, plus a drawer in front to store toys and food. The product fits nicely on the passenger seat and can be secured to the seat with a lap belt. However, I didn't find it especially sturdy: The seat shifted around curves, and when Darwin sat up or moved around, it seemed a bit top-heavy.

Dog Says: Didn't appreciate being confined in the little seat, but enjoyed being able to look out the window without standing on hind legs and leaning



Outward Hound Pet Lookout Car Booster Seat.



Outward Hound Auto Window Bumper.

out. When the scenery got boring, the lambswool was cozy for curling up in.

Grade: B-

Product: Outward Hound Pet Lookout Car Booster Seat (Petco, 877-738-6742, www.petco.com;

\$36.99)

Driver Says: I like that this seat attaches around both the headrest and the back of the front seat, so it doesn't have top-heavy and wobbly problems. But what a lot of straps! The seat folds down for storage, but inflating the air cushion and hooking up the straps galore is too time-consuming for a dog owner on the go.

Dog Says: The straps were a deal-breaker: It was tricky to hop on and off the seat without getting legs wrapped up in the lines.

Grade: D

Product: Outward Hound Auto Window Bumper (Paws on the Trail, 519-669-3960, www.pawsonthetrail.com;



Darwin, in the Metallic Black Racing Doggles: Don't ask her to keep them on.

ABOVE BY JULIA EWAN — THE WASHINGTON POST; OTHERS PROVIDED BY MANUFACTURERS

Driver Says: Larger dogs that can rest their chin on the window might appreciate the padded holder, and drivers might like fewer nose smudges on the window. The cushion clips onto a partially opened window in seconds, but it's a hassle to take it off every time the window is fully opened or closed. In addition, I'm not convinced that dogs need a soft cushion for their chins.

Dog Says: Chin rest, pshaw! All a dog needs is fresh air running through one's fur at 25 mph.

Grade: C



Outward Hound Extend-A-Seat, meant for large dogs.

Product: Outward Hound Extend-A-Seat (J-B Wholesale Pet Supplies, 800-872-6027, www.jbpet.com;

\$24.99)

Driver Says: The firm, padded panels stretch across the leg-room in the back seat and keep the floor and front seat off-limits to the dog. Ideal for bigger dogs who like to sprawl on the back seat, but I'd recommend using a harness to keep the dog secure. The seat folds up for storage.

Dog Says: Makes it difficult to access those yummy crumbs behind the front seat.

Grade: B

Wanted: Your Photos

You shoot, you could score prime real estate in the Travel section: We're now accepting submissions for our eighth annual photo contest.



The topic — travel — is broad, so have some fun with it; experiment with lighting, angles, subjects and composition. We're looking for pictures that make the viewer react emotionally, that get to the heart of the travel moment rather than just record what the eyes see. Shoot, and surprise us.

One entry per person. Photo must have been taken in 2006-07. Attach a sticker or notecard with your name, contact info and a detailed caption to the back of the photo (please do not send loose sheets of paper; make sure the information sticks to photo back). Photos, which are nonreturnable, may be color or black-and-white, and in print form. (Sorry, we can't accept slides or digital picture files.) Send prints to The Washington Post Travel Section Photo Contest, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071. Entries must be received by July 20. Photos become the property of The Washington Post, which may edit, publish, distribute and republish them in any form. No purchase necessary. Post employees and their immediate families are not eligible. Please do not call to ask if we have received your entry. The winning photos will be published in August.

EXTREME TRAVEL TRIVIA

BY KITTY THUERMER

Contest 396: Bottoms Up

After the D.C. dry cleaners avoided having to pay \$54 million for a missing pair of pants, they took a break and chilled by a lake northeast of Plaster Rock in New Brunswick, Canada.

Name the lake.

Deadline for Contest 396 entries is July 6. E-mail entries to travtrivia@washpost.com; put "ETT No. 395" in the subject field. **Include full name and address.** One entry per person. The winner, who gets a Travel tote bag, is chosen at random from correct entries.

RESULTS FROM 394: PICTURE THAT

In Contest 394, we asked you to name the town southwest of Kalamazoo, Mich., suggested by the accompanying photo. Congrats to **Bessie C. Lewis** of Washington, who wins a Travel tote bag for sniffing out Paw Paw.



BY ALEXANDER NATRUSKIN — REUTERS