

# GEAR

★ THE LATEST GREAT STUFF FOR YOUR DRIVING LIFE

## PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

### ESCORT PASSPORT iQ

★ True story: On a recent cross-country trip I was approaching a red-light camera trap when my Passport iQ warned me of approaching danger. After taking a quick glance at its clear and informative screen, I spotted the oncoming traffic light changing from green to yellow, so instinctively I slowed down and stopped. The car in front of me didn't and the strobe went off. In California the fine would be \$351, just over half of the Passport iQ's \$649 retail price. And that's not to mention the increased insurance rates that would compound the pain of the infraction for years to come.

That's the beauty of the Passport iQ 3D GPS nav unit, a 5-inch touchscreen display combined with a built-in radar/laser/red-light-camera detector. This gadget, a driver's best friend, can be continuously updated to stationary threats (stationary speed and red-light cameras) via an optional subscription, protecting your driver's license while providing an easy-to-follow, voice prompted navigation. Seems like a bargain to me.

One feature that was really appreciated on my trip, with all the freeway driving, was the programmable "over limit" warning, which I set to 10 mph over posted limits (the Passport iQ is pre-programmed with posted speed limits along most roads). This way if my right foot was getting heavy, I had a gentle nudge to back off.

If you've used a standalone GPS, the iQ's touchscreen interface will be intuitive. When you find the gas gauge pointing to E, gaining access its powerful database will instantly locate the nearest service station. That saved my bacon, especially in Nebraska, where exits for fuel can easily be 25 miles or more apart.

The Passport iQ's radar and laser detector capabilities are first rate, on a par with Escort's

top-rated 9500ix. In its radar/laser detector mode screen, it features the ability to track multiple threats, a handy feature. Given that the 9500ix carries a retail price of \$499 by itself, the GPS navigation capabilities in the Passport iQ adds just \$150 to the price.

Escort has priced the Passport iQ right in the serious road tripper's sweet spot with the combined cost of two separate devices. The Passport iQ is a product that performs as advertised and its level of convenience and integration is unmatched by any combination of factory- and aftermarket-installed options or accessories. It is especially attractive for those car owners lacking a built-in nav system or one that's in need of updating.

And knowing the product team at Escort never stands still, expect to see enhancements to the



Passport iQ in every product cycle. What would we like to see next? A Bluetooth hands-free interface is promised and it's not unreasonable to expect that real-time traffic updates will follow. All we could ask for is the addition of a Sirius/XM satellite radio for those drivers with cars that lack it. —John Sykes

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