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**REINVENTING THE WHEEL****Tailgating Gear**

By IAN MOUNT

January 13, 2005

• **What Is It:** The latest options for making **tailgating** at this year's NFL playoffs a luxury experience. Freedom Grill makes a stainless steel gas grill that attaches to the rear trailer hitch of an SUV or pickup and swings out for safe grilling outside the stadium. Go Products also sells hitch-attached stainless steel grills that sport a built-in ice box and a 180-watt CD/MP3 stereo with a radio. For the serious parking lot chef, Brinkmann Corp. makes the Roadmaster series of huge trailer-mounted smoker grills, with the largest at about eight times the size of a typical backyard charcoal grill. And to keep beverages cool, Waeco USA makes portable fridges -- from 18 to 110 liters in size -- that plug into dashboard cigarette lighters.

• **Cars That Have It:** Some car makers are building tailgater-friendly gear directly into their vehicles as standard features. The cargo floor in the Honda CR-V is removable and unfolds to become a picnic table (complete with an umbrella hole). And hybrid versions of the Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra come with four 110-volt outlets to power fridges or stereos.

• **Upside:** The products can make the stadium lot your backyard home away from home. Plus, with a grill outside the vehicle, you never have to worry about accidental carpet burns or grease stains from runaway hot dogs.

• **Downside:** Anything hanging off the back of your SUV can be ungainly when it comes time to negotiate a crowded parking lot. Also, while Waeco refrigerators are designed to shut off if the power gets too low, most devices that plug into a lighter adapter can bleed your battery dry.

• **Cost:** The Freedom Grill 100 will set you back \$799, while Go Products' Grill-n-Chills run between \$2,495 and \$2,995. The Roadmaster smokers sell for between \$4,299 to \$7,999. An 18-liter Waeco fridge, which holds about a case of beer, sells for \$449 (a kit to mount it in the bed of a pickup adds \$60).



Freedom Grill FG-100

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