

WANTED

LISTEN UP

Record player, meet the iPod shuffle. For the vinyl loyalist constantly on the move, the **Playbutton** may be the perfect solution. The customized button doubles as an LP, with discreet play buttons on the back and a lone jack for headphones—simply pin to your lapel and go. (\$25, playbutton.co)

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DECONSTRUCTED

LUXURY CALLING

What if your phone could live forever? Yves Béhar and Aesir answer the call. (\$8,100 required.)

BY JULIE TARASKA

In these days of ever-smarter smartphones, the debut mobile from Danish design firm Aesir is notable for the features it lacks: a camera, an Internet connection, built-in obsolescence. "Instead of more, we proposed better and longer lasting," says designer Yves Béhar. "It became a way to answer questions like, Why do I need a new phone each year? And why does it have to be complicated?" For answers, Aesir

founder Thomas Møller Jensen spent two-plus years gathering an army of materials specialists, engineers, and craftspeople. The result, the +YvesBéhar, has exceptionally clear audio and parts that are fully replaceable ad infinitum. "We want the phone to be as interesting and relevant in 10 years' time as it is today," says Jensen. We peeked at the features underlying the phone's 6,000-euro price. aesir-copenhagen.com

1. SCREWS

French and Swiss craftspeople who specialize in luxury watches make all of the phone's gold and steel metalwork, using microtools and extensive hand assembly. Miniature metal screws, which are more durable than customary plastic, seal the handset and keys, yet allow technicians to access the phone's innards for later upgrades and repairs.

2. BODY

"Ceramic is used in high-end mobile phones, usually just at the ear pillow," Jensen says. "It's sturdy, light, and scratchproof." But that makes it pricey. The +YvesBéhar opts for a full

ceramic handset to increase durability and support longevity. A French company that specializes in polishing watch bracelets—and which invented machinery that exactly mimics the movement of two hands—polishes the phone's metal exterior.

3. EARPHONE

To coax the highest-quality sound out of the phone, considerations ranged from ringtones (Danish-Vietnamese musician Chris Minh Doky composed a bespoke series in the optimal key) to the shape of the phone's speaker holes (they tried three shapes before settling on round). Béhar drew

upon his experience designing the Jambox speaker when sketching the phone's audio mechanics.

4. SCREEN

Instead of being glued on, as is the norm, the +YvesBéhar's crystal sapphire lens slips into the casing, allowing for a narrower phone profile and more secure screen. Like high-end camera lenses, the crystal is coated in a patented, resilient film that allows for an ultraclear display, even in sunlight.

5. ANTENNA

The ceramic antenna's radiation pattern is printed on with metallic silver paste. By choosing ceramic—rather than pure metal—engineers can make the antenna slimmer. That reduces the proximity of nearby metallic components and decreases distortion (a lesson learned from the iPhone 4, when its metallic outer frame wreaked havoc on its reception). The team avoided similar problems with the phone's metallic stripes and speakers by creating an overmolded internal chassis with metal-screw inserts supported by engineering-grade plastic. The solution preserves Béhar's design while still optimizing antenna reception.

6. KEYPAD

Instead of a single piece of plastic substrate, which relies on distortion to trigger the right number, the phone's keypad comprises wholly independent buttons, which ups its ease of use. The buttons run edge to edge, maximizing space, while navigation and scrolling keys sport distinct textures, letting users differentiate them by touch.



SHOW OFF

The asterisk: not just for dissertations. Deck the walls with a dose of über-modern grammar with the **George Nelson Asterisk Clock**, originally designed by the architect-artist in 1950 after a lively doodle session with Isamu Noguchi and Bucky Fuller. (\$300, momastore.org)

ARCHIVE

RAIN CHECK

Singin', workin', playin'—do whatever you like in the rain with these dapper umbrella designs.

"There's not a person on the planet who hasn't been frustrated with a cheap umbrella," says David Kahng, CEO of Davek Accessories. Seven years ago, the mechanical engineer reinvented the wet-weather standby with his 200-piece metal-frame model. The Solo's clean design points to a long-standing trend: The stronger the umbrella, the more spartan the look. But the industry is lightening up, thanks to new interest in spunky prints—or, in the case of London Undercover, alphabet soup. "We show traditional heritage patterns, but we also have to serve the eccentric," says CEO Jamie Milestone. Ironclad or ironic, they've got you covered. —MARGARET RHODES

ARCHIVE

TOP COAT

Mackintosh fuses past and present with modern raincoats long on lineage.

Few raincoats are more reliable than a Mackintosh. Brand founder Charles Macintosh created the world's first waterproof fabric in 1823, when he bonded layers of cloth with a rubber solution. The method is still used today in a Scottish factory where Mackintosh craftspeople (who endure a three-year apprenticeship) construct each piece, sealing interior seams with glue applied by hand. In addition to supplying Louis Vuitton and Hermès, Mackintosh opened its first stand-alone store in London this January, showcasing its own designs, like the men's Clisham (\$980). "Owning a Mackintosh is much like owning a Savile Row suit," says brand manager Gary Bott. "It's an investment piece for any wardrobe." mackintosh-uk.com —SS

