

# OVERLAND JOURNAL



James Bay, Canada

Lightweight Tent Test

Trailer Comparison

Jaguar Trail



# Long-term Review: The National Luna Fridge

By Scott Brady



The National Luna combines technology, performance, and quality construction into a class-leading fridge.

The market is glutted with products designed to a minimum-performance standard, and incorporating a minimum number of features, with low price as the only objective. Thankfully, a few companies still refuse to compromise the goal of putting quality first. In our 12-volt fridge test last year (*Overland Journal*, Summer 2007), we found National Luna to be one of those companies, and a year with the NLR-40 has done nothing to change my opinion.

The functional requirements of a fridge begin for me when I leave the house. Usually my first stop is at a market to stock up on drinks, bottled water, steaks, and vegetables. This first stop highlights two of the unique features of the NLR-40: interior space layout and rapid cooling performance. The combination of a small upper crisper area (with basket) and deep main storage compartment keeps fruits and veggies from getting smashed, and allows efficient layering of meats and drinks in the larger compartment. The second impressive feature is the rapid cooling capability—very rapid. This fridge can bring room-temperature sodas to refreshingly cold in just over an hour, after which the thick insulation keeps them that way.

Of course no product is without a quibble or two, and the National Luna cannot dodge a couple of complaints. Most obvious is the complexity of the control panel. Apple was certainly not involved in the design review, as neither the functions nor their access are intuitive, requiring me to keep the manual tucked in the optional insulation cover. With the manual in hand, all features are available, but there is no question the process is more complex than turning a simple dial.

Another complaint is one reflected in the original review, which is the lack of a power switch. Turning off the NLR-40 requires unplugging the cord. Finally, the National Luna carries a premium price tag, which will understandably give pause to some budget-constrained buyers. It will be up to the individual to determine if a 30- to 40-percent improvement in performance is worth the 100-percent increase in price.

The durability, rapid cooling performance, and thoughtful interior layout combine to make the National Luna the unit I will use in my new Discovery project. Both the classic 5-speed Land Rover and the National Luna are the perfect tools for my chosen adventures. Available from [equipt1.com](http://equipt1.com), 866-703-1026.

## Other Unit Reports

An unusual result of the *Overland Journal* fridge test was that all of the units tested went to homes among our staff, except one: the FridgeFreeze. The Engel found its way into our conservation vehicle project, where Roseann modified it with nearly every accessory available, including a Two-Zone compartment (see the 2008 *Overland Journal* Annual Gear Guide). The National Luna has been in use for months at a time keeping elk meat frozen in my garage, and has accompanied me on two major desert trips in my Jeep Rubicon. The Waeco is now with one of our test teams, serving full-time duty in their 4Runner. However, despite the impressive industrial-strength appearance of the FridgeFreeze, it proved to be the least used because of its bulk and weight, and in the end it was the unit no one wanted. Proof that function can still win over style.