

The Lincoln Star Concept Previews the Brand's Electric Future

With the promise of three new EVs by 2025, Lincoln needed to establish a new direction.

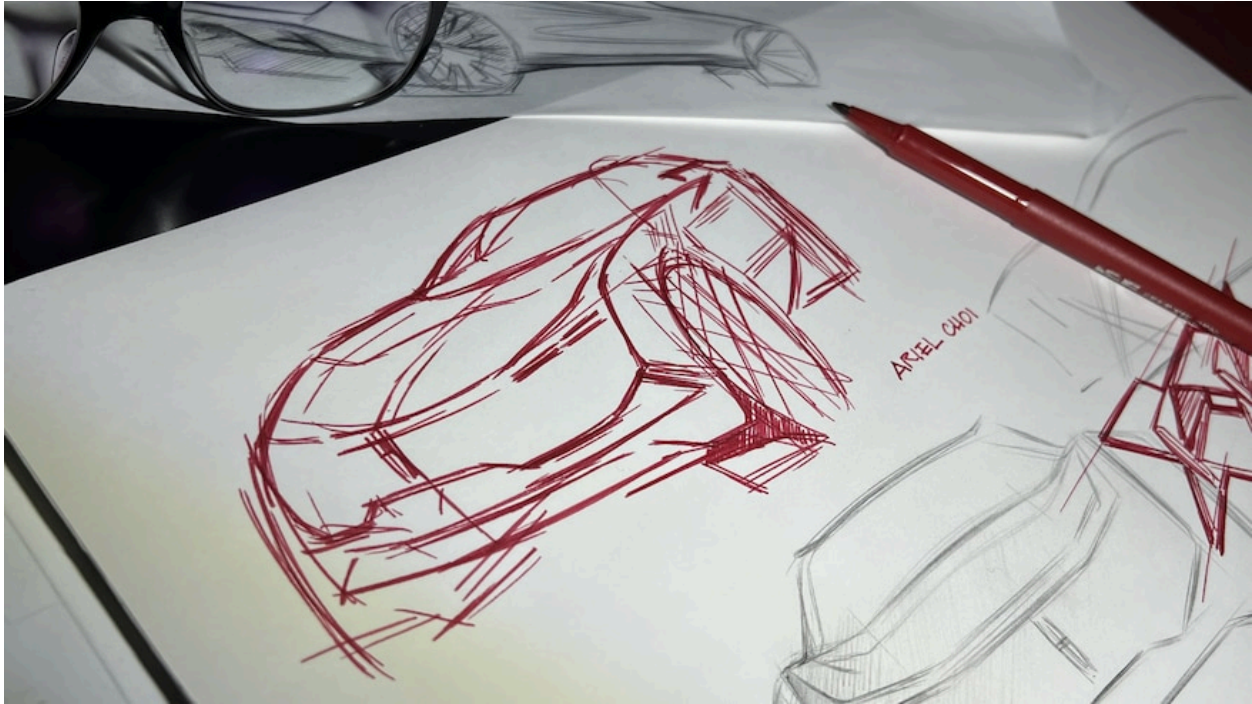


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Like sailors and explorers of the past exploring new lands once did (and some intrepid seafarers or pilots still do), finding a reference in the night sky to track the direction of where you're going and where you've come from is critical. Preferably that something is constant and will be there whenever you need it as you wander unfamiliar places (and, you know, it isn't cloudy outside). Just as those long ago discoverers used a reference star, a lodestar, to make their way through the night, [Lincoln will use a star of its own—the Star Concept](#)—as its guide as it moves into an all electric and connected future, where new digital content and features can be added later in a vehicle's life.

The Return Of The Concept Vehicle



As manufacturers venture into the electric vehicle era, simplified vehicles with flat floors affording ever more space are tempting for engineers to stuff in even more cutting-edge technology, more (and sometimes larger) screens, and gimmicky features. Often times these over-the-top design leaps are incorporated into prototypes close to production, but aren't they just more fun when they're installed in a pure show car, one that isn't intended to ever go on sale? The Lincoln Star Concept is just such a fantasy, bundling loads of features and design cues hinting at what [Lincoln and its teams are thinking about when the brand goes fully electric](#). Yes, this is a return of the wild concept vehicles you remember OEMs decades ago—think GM's midcentury Motorama meets modernity.



Let's start with the lighting, as that's something many manufacturers deploy to distinguish their vehicles next to grille shapes. Given how the latter won't be as necessary on EVs as they are on ICE vehicles, lighting is going to become a more crucial brand identifier. So what will Lincolns' peepers look like in the future?

LED light touches are abound on the Star Concept, with the frontal area featuring a full-width LED matrix with the Lincoln "star" emblem backlit through a body color nose panel. Above those, the frunk (front trunk) lid features lighting within its diamond-like lattice structure that fades to black with a clear center. While the clear portion would expose your belongings, it can be set to a privacy mode that completely hides the contents.



There are even lights above each wheel, with a small line of light following the shape of each wheel arch and molded flush with the body. The front doors feature a backlit Lincoln "star" emblem that disappears when the vehicle is off; like the front badge, this lit element shines through the skin of the door. The split between the glass roof and cabin glass (including the windshield and rear window) also is highlighted by a thin, continuous strip of light. Stepping towards the rear, the tail lights span across the split gate rear and feature more of the diamond-shaped lattice seen in the front. The "Lincoln" logo and LED highlights are—you're probably ready for this one—hidden behind the body skin and disappear into the body color when off.

So Much Glass



With the additional interior space an EV can provide, it's a shame to feel so cooped up by excessive bodywork and minimal glass area. Not an issue with the Star Concept. First, there are no B-pillars and the doors open from the [center like an old-school coach-door Lincoln Continental](#). The A- and D-pillars are made of glass, with [a 3D-printed metal diamond lattice support structure](#) made underneath them. This structure gives strength while also providing transparent openings for better visibility and lending the Star Concept an almost open-air feeling. If the sun is too much, the roof features a digital shade to block it out.

A Simplified Body Design



With Lincoln looking to go all electric, it also needed a new body shape that embraces classic Lincoln design with modern aerodynamics for maximum EV efficiency. It's why the body, while SUV-like in its general shape, is streamlined without most of the traditional body trim we see on current gas-fed models.

The facias transition smoothly into the sheetmetal and the doors are shapely but without the usual moldings. The wheels are not only larger, but also have a minimum of extra width for reduced rolling resistance and are aerodynamically designed with mostly closed-off faces. Even the door mirrors have been replaced with small cameras. It all makes for a much cleaner design without reducing the Star's muscular SUV stance.

Embrace An Entry Sequence



As the coach doors open to greet the passengers, the steering wheel folds out from underneath the Star's floating dashboard. An LED matrix in the upper door panels recalls a diamond stitch pattern and Lincoln emblems guide you towards the lounge-style rear seats. Individual screens then slide out from the front seat backs, hidden away inside their upper seat back covers. All of this is also timed with the exterior lighting to create the "Lincoln Embrace" welcome sequence.

Luxury Interior For Four



The interior is split between the front and rear passengers by unique finishes and alternatives to leather and chrome that retain the look and feel of both. The front is lightly colored and features strip lighting in the floor with seats that surround them for maximum comfort. If the front passengers would like to talk to the rear passengers face-to-face, both front seats can swivel 180 degrees. Spanning the entire floating dashboard is a curved digital screen that allows content to flow seamlessly across and from front to back while a table slides out from the dash and between the front occupants for an extra workspace.

Just above that sliding table are the touch-sensitive shifter controls, while infotainment control is performed by a dial on the center console. The brake and accelerator controls are drive-by-wire, but the control is a single pedal made of clear materials to keep from interrupting the flow of the floor lighting.

Wait, there is only one pedal, though—what gives? Meet Lincoln's take on one-pedal driving, wherein simply lifting off the accelerator dials up sufficient stopping power via the regenerative braking (and, we hope, a mechanical back-up system). So, uh, Lincoln took this idea—which is available today in several production EVs—to its nadir by literally going with one pedal, without a separate brake pedal just in case. Bold. You'll also find that the front trunk area passes through to the cabin, with no firewall in between. That front cargo area also features a drawer that slides out with the entire front panel for extra storage space under the front trunk.

Like A First-Class Cabin In The Second Row

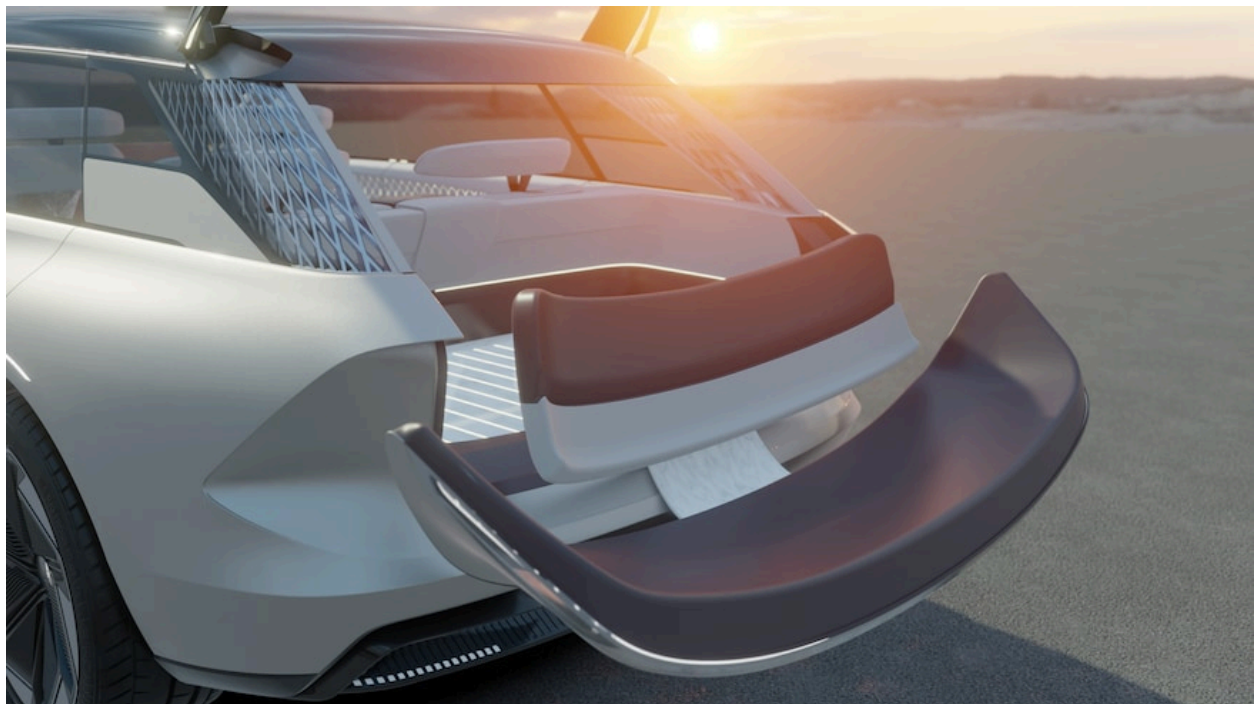


The rear passenger area flips the script and goes with wine-colored flooring and laid-back seats with leg extensions that slide out and allow their occupants to prop their feet up. Don't worry about shoes dirtying up that leg rest, as occupants' shoes can be placed in a slide out cubby made into those foot

rests. Much like first-class cabin seating on a plane, the rear seats feature an elegant table that folds out of the rear doors so passengers can use it for wining and dining.



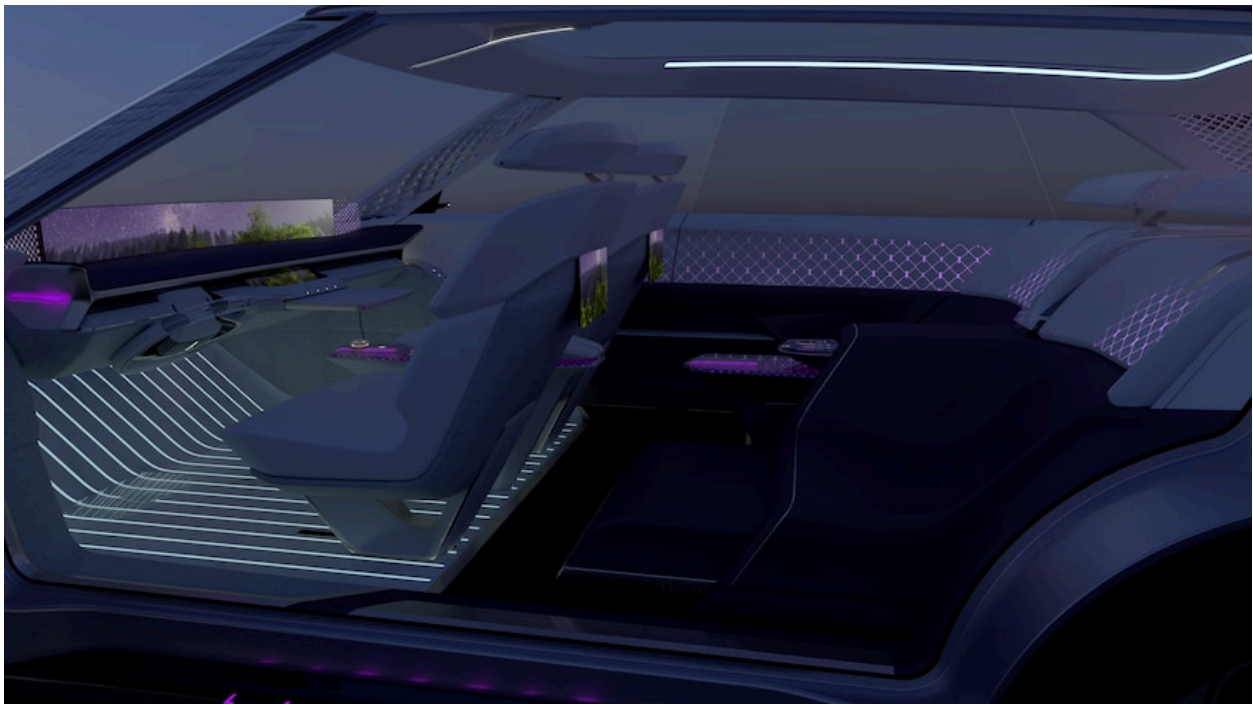
As if a luxury drinking experience requires cold snacks, the Star Concept features a glass beverage chiller between the upper seatbacks. Those upper seatbacks also feature LED lighting with a diamond and Lincoln badge image coming through. The rear passenger center console also slides out as a convenient place to rest objects while the climate and light controls for the rear occupants.



While the interior is designed for only four people, the rear split gate can be turned into a rear seat, with a seat back that folds out from the cargo area and the seat bottom formed from the tailgate panel, though this presumably is only for when the Star is parked.

Between the rear door panels is a hidden compartment called the "Lincoln Attaché," which works as storage and a charge point for devices. It's also able to wireless connect incoming content from apps that can be passed digitally to their individual screens, allowing them to work without needing direct access to their laptops, tablets, and other connected devices.

An Open Space Isn't Enough



While the spacious interior allows tons of light in, the Star Concept features three "rejuvenation moods" tied to our natural circadian rhythm as we flow through the day. (Bear with us, this is Lincoln's gig, not ours.) These moods are also designed to help get your mind off of the chaos of traffic or work and make the car into your true third space and sanctuary. There is "Coastal Morning," with lighting and sounds that remind you of walking along the beach during sunrise, plus the fragrance of sea mist. Yes, the cabin will be filled with fragrances for each mood.

Another mood is "Mindful Vitality," with invigorating sounds, lighting, and artwork on the screens and a flowery fragrance to remind you of a nice springtime day. Pictured above is "Evening Chill," which is a darker theme with a nighttime sound track and a night sky video playing as an evergreen fragrance fills the cabin like you're walking back on a cool, moonlight night to your campsite in the Pacific Northwest.

It's All Connected, All The Time

What if you didn't like the lighting sequence during startup or you wanted different images playing during one of the rejuvenation moods? What if a new feature could be added digitally, such as a new driving mode or voice command? What if the Lincoln Star (if it were real), were secondhand and the new owner wanted features that were left out during its first purchase? The future path for Lincoln isn't just furnishing new vehicles and dealership experiences, but also new digital content for existing cars. Lincoln is fully embracing the idea of a truly customized experience through its wireless updates and plays with it on the Star. New features could be purchased and downloaded to [Lincoln's new EVs along with the usual software updates and fixes](#). These vehicles will always be connected to the web just for this reason.



That pie-in-the-sky connectivity goal also explains why Lincoln has waited longer than Ford to move forward with splashy new electric vehicles. The luxury brand needed a vehicle platform that was advanced enough to allow for all of these features and design ideas to become a potential reality, and to keep up with developments down the road.

As of right now, the underpinnings of Ford's EVs just aren't advanced enough to be the technology leader that Lincoln wants to be seen as. Joy Falotico, president of Lincoln, explains: "We made a choice to wait for the all new architecture, which is what the Lincoln Star Concept is based off of and what some of our future EVs will also be based on. We waited for a platform we felt that had all the Lincoln Intelligence that is required for the digital content and connectivity our luxury clients expect." Mass market cars don't require the processing power as they feature less digital content and connectivity than what Lincoln is expecting to include in their EVs.

An EV Future



Even though the Lincoln Star Concept isn't destined to production, over half of the Ford luxury brand's global volume is expected to be EVs someday. Lincoln anticipates having its first three all-electric platforms by 2025, with a fourth coming in 2026. Production is also expected to be split between China—Lincoln's best-selling region—and America.

What Reality To Expect From The Star Concept

As wild as the Lincoln Star Concept is, we're confident most of its fanciful aspects have a decent shot at becoming reality in the coming years. The wheel design is an obvious one, as the face isn't terribly hard to replicate, but don't expect it on any ICE-powered Lincoln. The side cameras to replace mirrors for full rear view (rather than just the interior) are potentially coming, as it's mostly just U.S. FMVSS rules that are standing in the way.

Similar onboard connectivity and digital customization is already being done by [Polestar, with a recent offering of an OTA update to allow its users to increase the power of their Polestar 2s](#) by purchasing it online, so that's a given. We're also already seeing 3D-printed parts, both plastic and metal, in production cars. Even the way LED matrix lighting is used could become a production part, save for possibly shining through body panels like the doors, though it's possible to shave an area down to the thinness necessary for jaw-dropping backlighting effects.

Among the we'll believe-it-when-we-see it aspects are the lattice and glass structures of the roof pillars. The glass pillars have been shown before, but rollover requirements might still prevent this until 3D metal printing becomes more consistent in high-load structural use. A variable-translucence glass is already a thing, so the hood's privacy shade and the roof sunshade could work, however, we doubt a glass or see-through hood would become a production part and is mostly an "oh, wow" factor for the concept.

So, What's The Point Again?



The main goal here, again, is gauging customer interest in the Star's design and features and offering a peek at what future Lincoln EVs will look like. Look for elements of the Star to shine their way into those four new Lincoln EVs due by the end of the decade. Do we wish Lincoln would just make the Star into something right now? Of course, but we'll take the basic design furnished here and some of those fun widgets any way we can get them.