The best wireless headphones get even better

Hi, friends! Welcome to *Installer* No. 83, your guide to the best and *Verge*-iest stuff in the world. (If you're new here, welcome, please don't spoil *Andor* for me, and also you can read all the old editions at the *Installer* homepage.)

This week, I've been reading about ***Mission: Impossible*** and **Sam Altman's kitchen** and **bad roommates**, ranting to PJ Vogt about **all the ways** I'm trying to use my phone less, writing all my scratch notes in **Antinote**, deciding to be cautiously optimistic **about *The Paper*,** rewatching the last season of ***Mythic Quest***, **watching** and **reading** about life as an air traffic controller, trying to restart a meditation practice after discovering I get **Headspace** through work, and using **Ludex** to see if any of my sports cards are worth anything. So far… they're not.

I also have for you a pair of headphones you're practically guaranteed to love, two new sci-fi shows to check out, the new Airbnb, and much more. Let's dive in.

(As always, the best part of *Installer* is your ideas and tips. What are you reading / watching / listening to / playing / carrying around in a backpack this week? What should everyone else be just as into as you are right now? Tell me everything: installer@theverge.com. And if you know someone else who might enjoy *Installer*, forward it to them and tell them to subscribe here.)

- **The Sony WH-1000XM6.** Sony's over-ear headphones have been the best on the market for the last few years. The new ones aren't exactly, you know, mind-blowing, and $450 is a lot, but I'll take the improvements across the board — especially the better mics and noise cancelling.

- ***Doom: The Dark Ages.*** The first *Doom* game in five years, and by all accounts it is much more than just a sequel. I'm no scholar in the series, but I'm into the idea that it both has a solid story *and* has ratcheted up the quality of the fighting. Get you a game that can do both, you know?
- **Spotify's AI DJ.** *Finally*, this feature works the way it should. You can ask Spotify's chatbot to play you songs based on an artist, or a mood, or whatever else you're feeling, and it'll generate endless music on the fly. I've had good luck putting in a few artists I like, but telling Spotify to only play me music I've never heard.
- ***Murderbot.*** It's dystopian, it's funny, it's occasionally pretty existential. It's a story about life as a bot that would really just rather… not. Apple TV Plus continues to do sci-fi really well, and while I've seen a few folks who (as always) prefer **the books**, this is one to try this weekend.
- ***Love, Death & Robots* season four**. This Netflix series is a very different take on robots. A bunch of big-name filmmakers made all kinds of exciting, bizarre sci-fi shorts that seem to cross every genre and style you can think of. David Fincher directed one! And I guarantee you'll never guess what it is!
- **The DJI Mavic 4 Pro.** With a 360-degree gimbal, long battery life, and a 100-megapixel camera, DJI continues to outdo itself on the drone front. Technically, if you're in the US you're not supposed to be able to buy this $2,700 model — but my colleague Sean Hollister found them on sale anyway.
- **Internet Roadtrip**. There's a new Neal.fun thing, so I'm going to tell you about the new Neal.fun thing. This one's a tour through Street View in which everyone currently on the site gets to decide where we go next. Not quite as world-shattering as **Stimulation Clicker**, but still very good.
- **Airbnb**. I'm not sure what to make of this huge pivot,

honestly. Airbnb as a huge collection of travel experiences and services, rather than just homes, makes a certain kind of sense. But is this ultimately just, like, fancy Yelp? I don't know. But I'm fascinated by how big a swing this is.

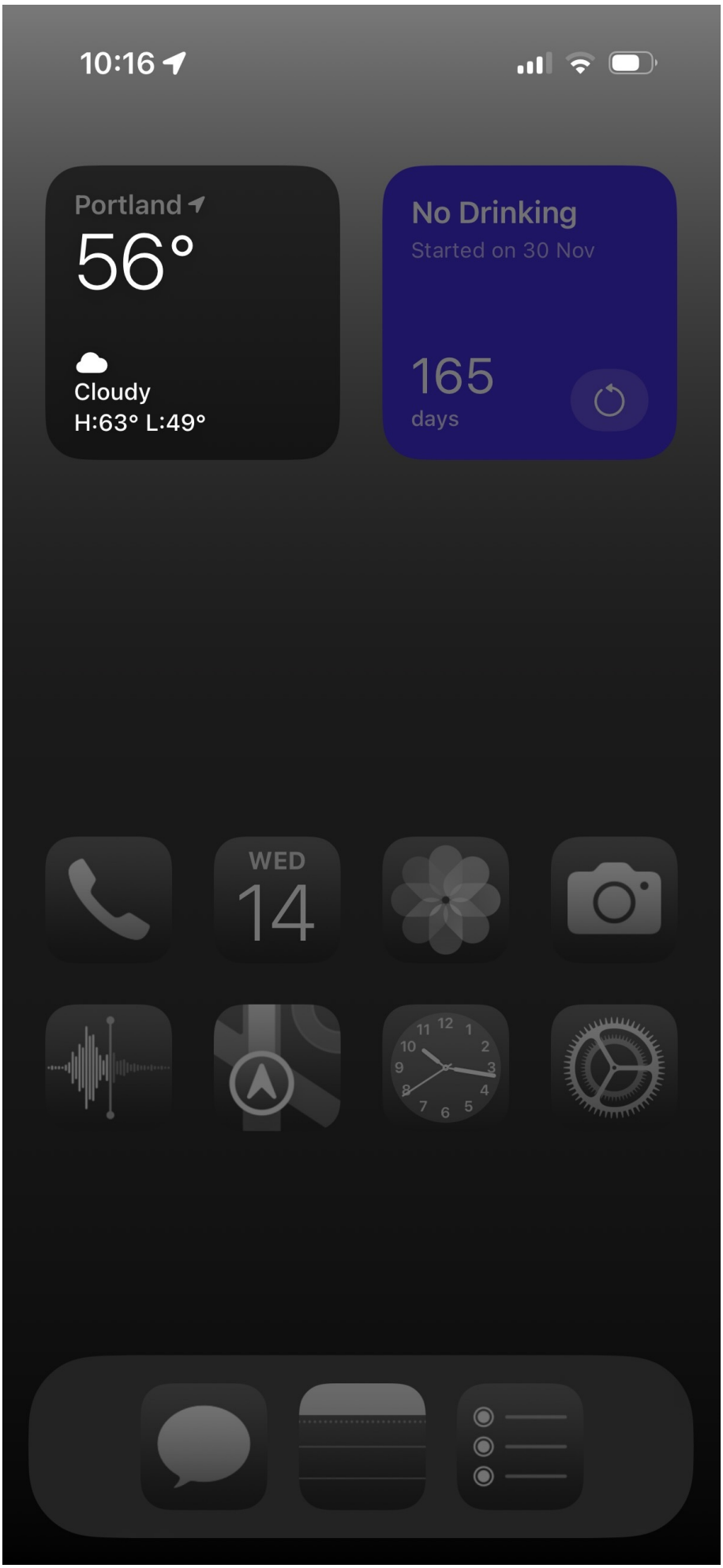
- **Android 16.** I really like the new design language for Android, which is bold and colorful and gives both users and developers a lot more to play with. It all feels a little more… alive, when everything else about smartphones is starting to feel drab and stale.

Screen share

Some personal news: **I'm having another kid!** I'm going on leave sometime around the beginning of July, and will be gone for the summer scoping sick baby gadgets, devising complicated spreadsheet-based systems for tracking eating habits, and once again testing every game I can find that's playable one-handed.

Good news, though: you'll be in good hands when I'm gone. *The Verge*'s **Jay Peters** is going to be taking over Installer for a couple of months, finding and sharing all the good stuff just like always. (Best I can tell so far, Jay likes wonky indie games the way I like note-taking apps, so get ready to fill up your consoles in a hurry this summer.) You'll be hearing from him here a bit for the next several weeks, too, but I'm not going anywhere just yet.

As he starts to get ramped up for all things *Installer*, I figured the best way for us all to get to know Jay would be to have him share his homescreen. It's just the price of admission 'round these parts. Here it is, plus some info on the apps he uses and why:


10:16
Portland
56°
Cloudy
H:63° L:49°
No Drinking
Started on 30 Nov
165
days
WED
14

The phone: An iPhone 16 Pro I got earlier this year. I upgraded from an iPhone 12 Mini that I miss desperately — the iPhone 16 Pro is too heavy and too big for me.

The wallpaper: A gray gradient I made using Apple's built-in wallpaper tools. I've tried the all-black background, but I find it jarring when I open an app and suddenly a notch or Dynamic Island appears. I made the apps gray so they're less visually stimulating, and as a constant reminder that I should probably be doing something other than scrolling on my phone.

The apps: Phone, Calendar, Photos, Camera, Voice Memos, Apple Maps, Clock, Settings, Messages, Notes, Reminders.

As much as possible, I rely on Apple's stock apps because they sync well between my phone and my Mac. (Voice Memos is a particularly useful one in my line of work!) I also keep my homescreen pretty tidy by shoving most of the few apps I keep on my phone into the App Library. If I'm actively testing or using one for whatever reason, it temporarily lives at the top under the two widgets.

The countdown widget comes from an app called **Days Since**. I'm a newish dad to a very early riser, and I realized last year that even one glass of wine made me a step too slow to keep up with my active kid. I've set a goal to not drink for a year just to see if I can do it, and so far, so good.

I also asked Jay to share a few things he's into right now. Here's what he sent back:

- I feel like my entire personality has become ***Clair Obscur: Expedition 33***, a wonderful RPG that's my favorite game of the year so far. It's just so good. And the soundtrack is outstanding.
- I think everyone should watch ***Taskmaster***, a British show where five comedians are judged on how well they do absurd tasks. The whole show is available for free on

YouTube, including the 19th season (sorry, “series”) that recently kicked off.

- I’m also loving slaying demons in ***Doom: The Dark Ages***. Specifically, I love using your giant shield to parry attacks. It has a really satisfying “gong” sound that I can’t get enough of.

Crowdsourced

Here’s what the Installer *community is into this week. I want to know what you’re into right now as well! Email installer@theverge.com or message me on Signal — @davidpierce.11 — with your recommendations for anything and everything, and we’ll feature some of our favorites here every week. For even more great recommendations, check out the replies to this post on Threads and this post on Bluesky.*

“Received my new **Minimal Phone** a week ago and it is excellent. There are still some issues to be resolved, but overall there is a ton of potential for this concept of a smart dumb phone.” — Robert

“Currently reading: ***Co-Intelligence: Living and Working with AI*** by Ethan Mollick. It’s fantastic so far, and has already changed my mind a bit on the whole AI thing.” — Matt

“**Morsle**, the daily word game that gives you the morse code of a 5 letter word to guess.” — Kev

“I was a user of **Levels** for a long time to track my glucose, but didn’t realize you can now buy a **Dexcom Stelo** for $80 on Amazon and it integrates into **Oura ring** to understand more about your holistic health. It’s a great alternative if you’re interested in tracking your glucose.” — Will

“My fav cheap headphones that I use most days are the **Sony MDRZX110NC**, which are kind of noise cancelling, but nothing fancy. My ‘real’ headphones are the MDR-V6 and the long-

discontinued MDR-V700DJ that I've mostly retired. Not really much of a wireless guy since I just like to plug stuff in." – Ben

"Got the early bird access to **Subo** app! It's an independent app to track your subscriptions, looks pretty too!" – Kevin

"The new season of Ewan McGregor and Charley Boorman's motorbike travelogue show on Apple TV Plus has started, this time titled ***Long Way Home***. Just a great show for lifting your spirits and for showing the joy of engaging with and enjoying other cultures." – Andy

"I got the **Siete Churro Strips** from Wegman's last week, and I've been crumbling them up and putting them on my vanilla ice cream at night. It's so good to get that little bit of crunch with the vanilla ice cream." – Ben

"Dialing in my work-from-home setup this week. How come no one talks about the fact that you can daisychain monitors with **DisplayPort 1.2 cables**?! Also, I am shopping around for a footrest for underneath the desk, and I have no idea where to start." – Jeremy

Signing off

I was in New York for a couple of days this week, working on a big new project I am very excited to share with all of you… later. One thing I got to do as part of the project was a deep dive into old Vines, and you know what? Vine was *awesome,* y'all. So much of that platform is now completely gone, but there's still so much good stuff in **YouTube compilations** and **other YouTube compilations** and **still other YouTube compilations**.

If you weren't around at the time, some of it might make absolutely no sense, but there's more comedy cold in these six-second videos than you'll find just about anywhere, And if

you’re feeling particularly nostalgic, you should read this story from our friends at *New York* about **maybe the greatest Vine of all time**.

See you next week!

https://www.theverge.com/installer-newsletter/668638/best-wireless-headphones-doom-murderbot-installer