

Drones thrill Martha Stewart... and US prison convicts

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Lifestyle guru Martha Stewart is singing the praises of personal drones and marveling at their untapped potential—although smuggling contraband into a prison might not be what she has in mind.

In an essay for Time magazine, the 72-year-old entrepreneur and domestic goddess confessed to being "hooked" on small drones since getting a camera-equipped model for her birthday and flying it over a beach in Maine.

"My mind started racing and I imagined all the different applications for my drone," said Stewart, who has since used her Parrot device to capture a bird's eye view of a party, a mountain hike and her landscaped gardens.

"It is hard to imagine Andre Le Notre laying out... the magnificent Chateau de Versailles (with) no drone to show him the complexities of the terrain," she added, citing the celebrated 17th century French landscape architect.

In South Carolina, meanwhile, the state Department of Corrections asked the public for help Thursday in identifying a second suspect in a failed attempt to airlift contraband into a prison filled with hardened criminals.

Mobiles phones, marijuana and tobacco made up the illicit payload of the small drone that crashed before it could get inside of the Lee Correctional Institution, which houses about 1,000 convicts.

It was discovered in bushes in April, and one person has already been taken into custody. But the case only went public this week as law enforcement released surveillance images of a potential second suspect.

"This is definitely a new and interesting way" to smuggle contraband into a prison, Department of Corrections spokeswoman Stephanie Givens told AFP by telephone.

In November last year, four people were arrested in Georgia after a sharp-eyed prison guard spotted a small [drone](#) being used to ferry two pounds (nearly one kilogram) of tobacco to waiting inmates.

Despite a growing number of small drones in American skies, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) says their use for anything other than personal purposes is illegal, pending the adoption of fresh regulations.

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