

**LES L. SHU**

EDITORIAL SAMPLES

# You're Projecting

Rear-projection televisions offer the best bang for your large-screen buck

Even the most ascetic of men can feel their discipline crumble when they start looking at HDTVs. Once you were confident in your masculinity; suddenly, you have a serious case of screen-size envy. So how do you indulge your bigger-is-better jones without having to tell the kids they're going to community college? Consider the latest in rear projection. These high-definition (1080 pixels of vertical resolution) widescreens use a small microchip to create bright images and deep blacks that rival or exceed those of plasma and LCD units. They're also slimmer and lighter than older rear-projection TVs, with most weighing less than 100 pounds. Sure, they're not as thin as plasmas or LCDs, but you'll still catch every detail of Jack Bauer's next 24...without the paralyzing buyer's remorse. **LES SHU**

## THE BIG EASY

The resolution of rear-projection TVs equals that of LCDs and plasmas.

## Best Color

*Mitsubishi WD-65831*  
65-inch, \$4,600

Whereas traditional rear-projection sets mix three primary colors (red, green, and blue), Mitsubishi adds yellow, cyan, and magenta to create brighter and sharper images. The light source provides more illumination to the Digital Light Processing chip for increased brightness, and each of the six colors can be manually adjusted for fine-tuning. Plus, the TV filters out video-signal distortions from DVD players and cable boxes to create a distortion-free picture. There are multiple video ports available to connect a variety of sources.

[mitsubishi-tv.com](http://mitsubishi-tv.com)

## Best Sound

*Samsung HL-S5687W*  
56-inch, \$3,200

With stealth speakers tucked inside, this 56-inch display eliminates the need for a separate audio system. Two acoustic chambers produce low-range audio, and additional speakers produce the midrange and high range. Together, the speakers create a virtual surround-sound environment, making this TV a visual and audio powerhouse. The Cinema Mode matches color to movie-production standards in dark rooms, and the Game Mode increases image response to match the fast-paced action of video games. A USB port lets you connect a portable hard drive to the TV to display images or play MP3s.

[samsung.com](http://samsung.com)

## Best Size

*Toshiba 72MX196*  
72-inch, \$4,800

Part of Toshiba's Cinema Series line, this TV features a sleek, high-gloss black bezel. It uses high-speed video processing to produce more than 4,000 levels of gradation, allowing for a smooth transition between light and dark. An Ethernet port connects to a PC for playback of MP3 music and JPEG photos. Additional touches include HD-window picture in picture, so you can watch one game on the big screen and highlights of another on the smaller window.

[twp.toshiba.com](http://twp.toshiba.com)

## TECH SUPPORT

How to future-proof your HDTV

### Get highly defined

If the price of a flat-screen TV seems too good to be true, it may be an old clearance model that doesn't support high definition. Look for one that has at least 720p resolution. Many new models now offer 1080p, the highest standard available.

### Protect your ports

Check for a selection of digital ports: HDMI to connect to upcoming high-definition DVD players, DVI for a computer, and FireWire for video cameras and HD DVRs. Also look for a built-in ATSC tuner to receive HD content over the air, and a CableCARD slot to receive digital cable without an external box.

### Guard against surges

You've spent thousands on a new TV, so don't let it fry during a power surge. Protect the investment with a power conditioner from APC ([apc.com](http://apc.com)). The company also offers units with battery backup, allowing you to finish watching a film or power down your equipment properly.

# Shot Machines

Navigating the slew of digital shooters

Digital cameras are a lot like designer jeans: Many brands make seemingly identical versions, so you may not find the one that suits you perfectly until after you've shelled out for something that's not quite right. Nowadays, every manufacturer is touting its own digital SLR, nearly all cell phones come equipped with point-and-shoot capability, and pocket cameras all look the same. To help you maneuver through this digital plethora, we've simplified things by identifying the best buy in each category. **LES SHU**

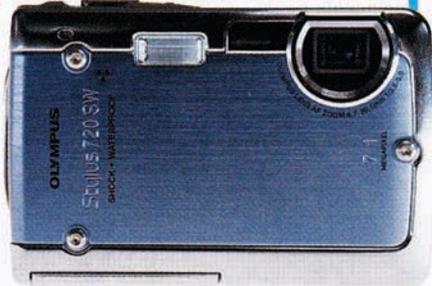


## BEST PROFESSIONAL SLR

Canon is renowned for its line of powerful lenses, and the **EOS 1D Mark II N** will accept virtually all of them, including older ones you may have from your film-based Canon SLR. It's fast—able to capture 8.5 frames per second in continuous speed. The camera uses Canon's proprietary chip and image processor to reduce distortion and quickly save images to the memory card. With a durable, weather-resistant metal body, this camera is not for the faint of heart. But if you're looking to shoot everything from studio-quality portraits to car races, it does the trick. \$3,999; [usa.canon.com](http://usa.canon.com)

## BEST COMPACT CAMERA

A rugged all-metal exterior construction means the **Olympus 720SW** can survive a five-foot fall and be submerged in water up to 10 feet. With a 7.1-megapixel resolution and a 3X zoom lens, the fully automatic 720SW produces sharp, crisp images and can record video clips. At less than an inch thick, it'll fit in any pocket. \$400; [olympusamerica.com](http://olympusamerica.com)



## BEST ENTRY-LEVEL SLR

Pocket digital cameras are great for everyday use, but if amateur hour is over, it's time to buy the 6.1-megapixel **Nikon D40** starter digital SLR. The manual mode lets you take full control of the camera, and the quick shutter response means you can capture fast-moving action, like your son's game-winning goal. Nikon also added a graphics-based help menu for those of us who are prone to ignoring the instruction booklet. \$599; [nikondigital.com](http://nikondigital.com)



## BEST CAMERA PHONE

The **Samsung GSM Black Carbon** camera phone has a 3.0-megapixel resolution with autofocus. Its white balance, exposure, and ISO settings can be tuned, and close-ups can be shot with the macro function. A TV-out port displays your photos on the big screen, and PictBridge lets you print them to a compatible photo printer. Works with T-Mobile and Cingular. \$399; [samsung.com](http://samsung.com)



## TECH SUPPORT

The best home printer

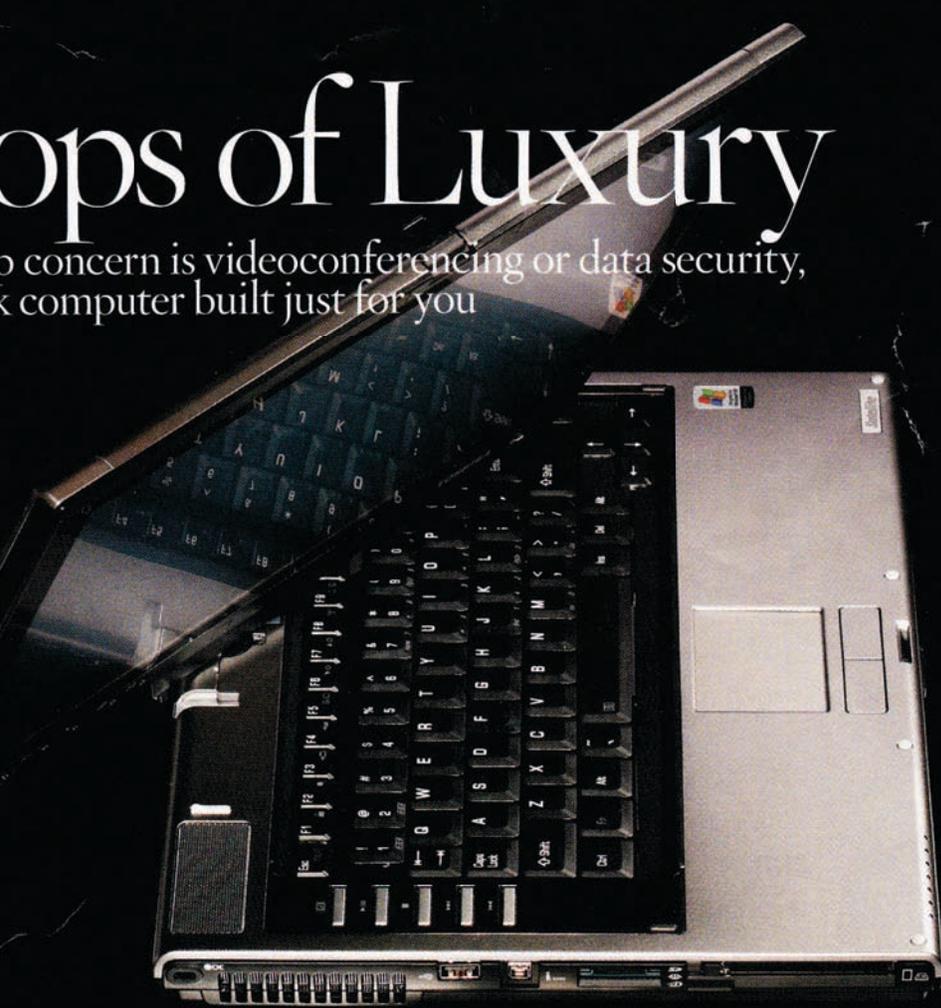
While most newer color printers can reproduce photos, certain models are designed for digital photography. **Epson's Stylus Photo R380** offers photo-lab results through the use of six color ink cartridges and a proprietary ink technology called Claria. Touted as "high definition," the ink allows for prints that are resistant to scratches, smudges, and fading. What sets the R380 apart from an ordinary printer is its independent operation from a computer. Most new digital cameras can print directly to the R380, and simple photo enhancements such as red-eye removal can be made using the printer's color display. It is also fast and can churn out a 4x6 photo in 13 seconds. \$200; [epson.com](http://epson.com)

# Laptops of Luxury

Whether your top concern is videoconferencing or data security, there's a notebook computer built just for you

Buying a laptop is like buying a car: You look for something that fits your personal needs, a model that will give you the freedom to move around as you choose—and that hopefully won't spend too much time in the shop. (And as with a car, you should get insurance on that puppy, especially if you're traveling with company secrets on your hard drive.) But test-driving computers isn't nearly as much fun as test-driving autos, so we decided to take the latest models around the block for you. Here's a quick and easy guide to finding your next travel companion.

LES SHU



**Best for Meetings**

Toshiba Tecra M7

**\$1,899**

Flip the screen open and it looks like any notebook. But swivel the screen around and fold it flat, and it turns into a tablet you can draw on or write on with a stylus. Windows XP Tablet Edition uses handwriting recognition to let you take notes quickly during a meeting without noisy typing. The widescreen display allows you to watch a movie on your lap while sitting in a dull seminar—or crammed in coach on a commuter flight.

[toshibadirect.com](http://toshibadirect.com)

**Best All Around**

**Best Security**

**Best for Students**

**Best Mobile Home Theater**

**Best for Gaming**

**Best for Travel**

**Apple MacBook Pro**

**Lenovo ThinkPad X60**

**Apple MacBook**

**Toshiba Qosmio G35-AV650**

**Dell XPS M1210**

**Sony VAIO UX Micro PC**

**Starting at \$1,999**

**Starting at \$1,490**

**Starting at \$1,099**

**\$2,999**

**\$1,200**

**\$1,800**

Thanks to the iPod's popularity, the rest of the world is now realizing what artists, musicians, and moviemakers have known for years: Apple makes the best laptop. Mac users are virtually immune to viruses and enjoy cutting-edge applications like Final Cut movie-editing software. And now powered by an Intel dual-core processor, Macs will run Windows, too.

Weighing less than 3 pounds, measuring less than an inch thick, and pulling out eight hours of battery life, the X60 is a great travel companion on long flights to meetings. A fingerprint scanner ensures that only you can access your company's secret files, and a wireless adapter lets you access the Web via Verizon Wireless's broadband service.

Despite its budget status, this notebook has fast Intel Core Duo processors similar to the one in Apple's flagship MacBook Pro. Included are a built-in camera and an easy-to-learn-and-use software bundle that even the pros would find appealing. Plus, you'll never have to worry about your child asking for a new computer because of virus ills.

With a large 17-inch screen and a TV tuner, the Qosmio is a suitable home theater alternative. It can play full high-definition DVDs or output the video to a plasma or LCD HDTV. The Windows Media Center software lets you record TV shows, play MP3s, or view photos with the included remote control.

For the guy who's a kid at heart and plays Tiger Woods PGA Tour into the wee hours or who demands speed when burning CDs or making movies, the M1210 delivers. Sporting an Intel dual-core processor and a separate graphics card, the notebook is both fast and efficient, allowing you to churn out spreadsheets while piloting a 747 in a flight simulator.

Like a PDA, this small touch-screen device fits in one hand or easily into a large coat pocket. Although it uses a low-wattage processor, the Micro PC runs a full version of Windows XP, and lets you enter info via a keypad or a stylus. It's equipped to handle wireless networking, including Cingular's EDGE service, and the camera lets you videoconference wherever you are.

[apple.com](http://apple.com)

[lenovo.com](http://lenovo.com)

[apple.com](http://apple.com)

[toshibadirect.com](http://toshibadirect.com)

[dell.com](http://dell.com)

[sonystyle.com](http://sonystyle.com)

## BACK UP YOUR CONTACTS

How to Bluetooth your cellular phone content to a computer

### Step One INSTALL THE SOFTWARE

Included with most phones is software for file exchange, such as Sony Ericsson's Sync Station. (Mac users can use iSync and Bluetooth File Exchange software that's bundled with Mac OS X.) Windows users can also purchase third-party software, such as BVRP's Mobile PhoneTools, which syncs a Bluetooth phone's data, including contact details, with their computer.

### Step Two PAIR THE DEVICES

Turn on the Bluetooth function on your phone and computer. Navigate to your phone's Bluetooth menu and have the phone search for a nearby device, i.e. your computer. (If your computer lacks Bluetooth, purchase an adapter in the form of a USB dongle or PC card.)

### Step Three TRANSFER FILES

With both devices connected, launch the application you've installed. Like your operating system's file browser, you can search your phone as if it were a disk drive, and drag and drop the files you want to copy over, such as images and sounds. You can sync the contact information from your phone and your PC's address book. Some software will even let you sync your calendar and contacts with Microsoft Outlook.

# AN HD DECREE

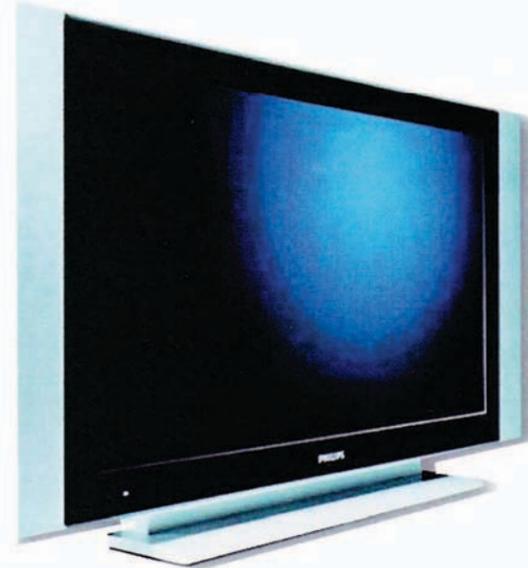
LOOKING TO PURCHASE THE MOST HIGH END OF SCREEN MACHINES? READ THIS FIRST. OR JUST STAPLE IT TO YOUR HEAD AND LET A BEST BUY CLERK READ IT TO YOU

High definition plasma screens are on everyone's wish list because, really, who wouldn't want to buy it? You know that flat is where it's at and, like a baby and his bottle, you want one. Now! So what's next?

Most high-end TV's being sold are HDTV or HDTV-ready (meaning they need an add-on tuner). The picture's perfect but the price ain't and vaguely satisfied customers will come to find that while there isn't a whole lot of programming available in high-def, much like Anna Nicole's girdle-size, that's changing quickly.

Many major sporting events are now broadcast in HD and cable and satellite providers are offering HD boxes, with a few select channels like HBO and Bravo in high-def (Time Warner Cable is even offering digital video recorders that can store HD programming). And there's VOOM, a service offering nothing but high-def programming. Why are they called VOOM, you ask? Search us. We're not the VOOM marketing department, people.

While DVDs may be a digital medium, they're not high-def because they can only display a 480-line resolution (versus HDTV's 720 to 1,080 lines). It'll be a while before the next generation of DVDs—currently called HD-DVD and Blu-Ray—are available, but they're expensive. A few new players can convert a DVD's low resolution up to 1,080 lines. It's a cheat, but it takes advantage of what your TV can do until the next generation. Just stay healthy and wait ,OK, Eddie Impatient? ■



**PHILIPS 50PF9630A 50-INCH PLASMA WITH AMBILIGHT 2**  
THE PLASMA HAS A SENSOR THAT MEASURES THE BRIGHTNESS OF YOUR ROOM AND CALIBRATES THE SCREEN'S BRIGHTNESS ACCORDINGLY GREAT. CAUSE WE CAN'T AFFORD TO SEE THE EYE DOC AFTER SPENDING ALL THIS CASH. \$5,699 @ PHILIPS.COM



**SAMSUNG HPR8072 80-INCH PLASMA**  
THE WORLD'S BIGGEST PLASMA MEASURES 80 INCHES. WE DON'T EVEN HAVE WALL SPACE THAT BIG! FOR PRICING, VISIT SAMSUNG.COM

## BOOB-TUBE BUYER BEWARE

JUST BECAUSE A TELEVISION SET IS FLAT, THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT CAN RECEIVE THE HDTV SIGNAL (THERE ARE TWO LOWER-QUALITY DIGITAL FORMATS, STANDARD AND ENHANCED DEFINITION). AN EDTV WIDE SCREEN PLASMA DISPLAY, FOR EXAMPLE, MAY LOOK LIKE ITS HDTV COUNTERPART (YOU MAY BE FOOLED BY THE SCAMP'S PICTURE QUALITY, TOO), BUT IT ISN'T TRUE HIGH-DEF. WHY YOU GOTTA PLAY US LIKE THAT, EDTV?



**HP LC3040N 30-INCH LCD**  
HP'S LCD OFFERS ALL THE HDTV GOODNESS AT AN EASIER-TO-SWALLOW (WE SAID EASIER, NOT EASY) PRICE. IT CAN DO DOUBLE DUTY AS A COMPUTER MONITOR. \$2,500 @ HPSHOPPING.COM



**DELL W3000 30-INCH LCD**  
IT MAY LOOK COOKIE CUTTER AND IT DOESN'T HAVE A TUNER BUILT IN, BUT THIS HD-READY MONITOR HAS A PICTURE QUALITY, SIZE AND PRICE THAT'S WALLET FRIENDLY. \$2,000 @ DELL.COM



**TOSHIBA 52HMX94 52-INCH DLP PROJECTION**  
DESPITE ITS BACKSIDE, IT LOOKS LIKE A PLASMA SCREEN WHEN VIEWED STRAIGHT ON. AND IT'S MUCH LIGHTER THAN THE HEAVY FAUX-WOOD REAR PROJECTION UNITS YOU GREW UP WITH. \$3,600 @ TOSHIBA.COM

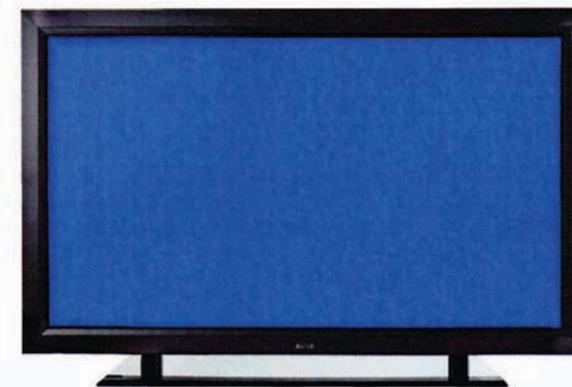
## TYPES OF HDTV DISPLAYS

**PLASMA:** THE SUPERSTAR OF ALL TV'S, PLASMA SCREENS ARE BRIGHT, HUGE AND THIN.

**LCD:** SIMILAR TO FLAT-PANEL COMPUTER MONITORS, LCDS ARE CRISP AND SLIM, BUT THEY CAN HAVE TROUBLE REPRODUCING DARK-BLACK COLORS. THEY'RE ALSO LIMITED IN SIZE AND EXTREMELY EXPENSIVE.

**REAR PROJECTION:** FOR VALUE AND SIZE, IT CAN'T BE BEAT. PICTURE QUALITY ISN'T SUPER BRIGHT AND RP IS BULKY AND HEAVY, ALTHOUGH NEW TECHNOLOGIES SUCH AS DLP AND LCDS ARE MAKING THEM FLATTER, LIGHTER AND MUCH CLEARER.

**CRT:** JUST LIKE THE TV'S YOU'RE USED TO, BUT TWEAKED WITH FLAT, WIDE SCREENS AND DIGITAL TUNERS, THEY'RE AFFORDABLE, BUT HEAVY.



**PIONEER ELITE PRO-1410HD 61-INCH PLASMA**  
THE ELITE HAS ONE OF THE BEST PICTURE QUALITIES OF ANY PLASMA. YOU'LL SWEAR YOU'RE LOOKING AT ARTWORK. AND LIKE ARTWORK, IT DOESN'T COME CHEAP. \$21,000 @ PIONEERELECTRONICS.COM

## DIGITAL VS. ANALOG

CRISP IMAGES, SURROUND SOUND, HIGH DEFINITION PICTURE. MULTI-CASTING AND STREAMING DATA ARE SOME OF THE FEATURES DIGITAL TELEVISION PROMISES. IF YOU LIVE IN OR NEAR A MAJOR CITY, CHANCES ARE THAT THE NETWORKS ARE ALREADY BROADCASTING IN DTV. IF YOU DON'T, FEEL FREE TO COME VISIT US SOMETIME.

THE FCC HAS MANDATED A COMPLETE SWITCHOVER FROM ANALOG TO DIGITAL BY 2007, BUT ANALOG WILL COINCIDE WITH DIGITAL UNTIL 85 PERCENT OF THE COUNTRY HAS ACCESS TO DIGITAL CONTENT. (NOTE TO THE VERY IGNORANT: DIGITAL CABLE IS NOT THE SAME AS DIGITAL TELEVISION.)

ALL ANALOG EQUIPMENT PURCHASED TODAY WILL BE ABLE TO RECEIVE THE NEW DIGITAL BROADCASTING THROUGH AN ADD-ON RECEIVER. MOST HIGH-END SETS HAVE DIGITAL TUNERS BUILT IN AND CAN DISPLAY THE PROGRAMMING IN ITS ORIGINAL DIGITAL FORM. AND THAT'S THE 14TH TIME YOU'VE READ THE WORD DIGITAL IN THIS PIECE. FEELS LIKE MORE, YEAH?

SECOND ROUND  
Internet TV has  
finally arrived,  
thanks to the  
launch of Sony's  
VAIO TP1.

**T**elevision  
networks  
have been  
streaming  
content over

the Internet for more than a decade, but until recently, the idea of the living-room computer—one box melding the two functions—has been a pipe dream. One of the primary challenges has been figuring out how to cram all the various components—TV recorder, CD/DVD drive, surround-sound receiver, music jukebox, and fully functioning computer—into a pint-size container that's stylish enough to integrate into living and entertainment quarters. Enter Sony's new VAIO TP1: a round, wireless, multitasking machine measuring about 10 inches across. It packs in all of the above features, plus a 300-gigabyte hard drive that can store up to 69,000 songs and 90 hours of recorded video. Unlike Apple's highly anticipated iTV (which merely acts as a conduit between your TV and your computer's iTunes content), the TP1 is a computer in its own right, and it can stream both hard-drive and Internet content directly onto a high-definition television. And because it runs on the new Windows Vista operating system, you can multitask along with it by, say, tweaking those Excel spreadsheets while catching up on *The Office*. Bringing work home has never sounded—or looked—so good. \$1,600, [sonystyle.com](http://sonystyle.com) LES SHU

# Picture Perfect

The home-entertainment computer has finally landed

## BEST WEB SITE OF THE MONTH

### HOW TO TURN YOUR VOICE MAIL INTO E-MAIL

Your mom called again. She left a long, rambling message about her cat on your home phone. Also on your cell phone. Also on your voice mail at work. If retrieving meaningless messages from all of your phone numbers is sucking away your time—if not your very life energy—head to [GotVoice.com](http://GotVoice.com). The Web site allows you to turn your voice mails into e-mails...for free. You can check your messages in any order, and because they're sent as files, you can hold on to them forever. GotVoice also lets you send messages to multiple recipients without ever picking up a phone. This way you can make sure your brother hears the cat message. L. S.

**PRODUCTION STUDIO**

It's a lot cheaper than renting studio time, but the **Belkin TuneStudio** can turn you into a budding Phil Spector (minus the weapons charges). The device can mix and digitally record live performances of up to four instruments or vocals in 16-bit, 44-kilohertz quality onto the latest-generation iPod. Recordings can then be played back for instant review or sent to a computer for editing. \$180; [belkin.com](http://belkin.com)

# Pod Enhancements

Five new accessories to soup up your iPod

Every year, two technology trade shows—the Macworld Expo (all things Apple) and the Consumer Electronics Show (everyone else)—try to outshine each other by announcing flashy new gadgets. This year, it was a knockout in the first round: Apple's new iPhone trumped every new offering from the nearly 3,000 companies at CES. Ironically, that phone, which won't go on the market for at least another few months, diverted attention from the inventive iPod add-ons, available right now, from third-party makers. Here are the best of the best. **LES SHU**

**PORTABLE ENTERTAINER**

Leave the bulky case of DVDs at home and bring the **Philips DCP750**—a portable DVD player that can also dock and play videos from an iPod. (The 80-gig iPod holds 100 hours of video.) Built-in speakers pump out Dolby Digital-quality sound, and a memory-card reader lets you view snapshots taken with a digital camera. \$149; [philips.com](http://philips.com)

**WIRELESS STREAMER**

When you dock your iPod on the **Griffin Evolve** (which doubles as a charger), the music is sent to two cube-shaped wireless speakers. When it's time to move to a different room, simply take the speakers with you—each one has a rechargeable battery that lasts 10 hours and a wireless range of more than 150 feet. \$350; [griffintechnology.com](http://griffintechnology.com)

**LOUDSPEAKER**

The **Ion iPA03** is made for backyard revelry. The two-way speaker blasts tunes from a docked iPod, has an output range of more than 150 feet, and runs on a rechargeable six-hour battery. Bring it out at the next family reunion and connect guitars and additional mikes to put on a concert for the kids. \$300; [ion-audio.com](http://ion-audio.com)

**BIG PICTURE**

The **ViewSonic PJ258D ViewDock** projects iPod video content onto a wall or screen for larger-than-life, razor-sharp viewing (in 720p/1080i resolution, thanks to a DLP chip). The projector is compatible with all of your other video inputs (DVD player, cable box, game console), and the 200-watt lamp lasts about 200 hours before it needs replacing. \$999; [viewsonic.com](http://viewsonic.com)



**TECH SUPPORT**  
Turning vinyl  
into digital

Instead of buying new digital versions of all of your old albums, you can convert and preserve the LP treasures you already own. The easiest way to do it is with Ion's iTTUSB10. The Mac- and PC-compatible turntable is equipped with antiskate control, and it converts analog LPs (both 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  and 45 rpm) into digital files, which you can then burn onto CDs or upload to your iPod. While it's a high-tech device, it's built with low-tech appeal: A single USB cord and conversion software puts the process on autopilot. \$149; [ion-audio.com](http://ion-audio.com)



# Hot Pursuit

A revolutionary oven that cooks as well as conventional units—at six times the speed

**FAST FOOD**  
TurboChef uses fast-moving hot air combined with microwaves to speed-cook food.

Ever since the late '40s, when Raytheon launched the Radarange—a nearly six-foot-tall and 700-pound mammoth microwave oven—appliance manufacturers have been trying to build ovens that cook faster and better. Because microwaves cook unevenly, destroying the texture of nearly every foodstuff, inventors have tried to couple the technology with other cooking methods, with mostly shoddy results.

Now comes TurboChef's 30-inch Double Wall Speedcook oven, which uses a combination of thermal heat, fast-moving air, and microwaves to quickly bake, broil, roast, or toast. The technology has received an early endorsement from Starbucks, which purchased the commercial version to launch its new breakfast sandwiches.

The device works by circulating superheated air in the cooking chamber while zapping your food with measured microwaves for precision cooking. This means you can roast a 12-pound turkey in 42 minutes (as opposed to four hours in a regular oven) or heat a frozen pizza in just three. The oven has retro-modern styling, a dial that lets you choose the cooking method, and an LCD screen that offers preset cooking instructions for more than 400 recipes, eliminating guesswork. \$7,895, [turbochef.com](http://turbochef.com) LES SHU

## BEST WEB SITE OF THE MONTH

### BACK UP YOUR COMPUTER FOR FREE

You know you should back up your hard drive often, but according to a 2006 Harris Interactive poll, 43 percent of computer users don't back up their data. It's a chore, as it involves plugging in clunky portable hard drives or swapping CDs during your precious free time. Still, you can't

help worrying occasionally about your family photos, your extensive business plan, or your unfinished-but-brilliant screenplay. So go right now, this instant, to a Web site that will back up your work for you. The best of the bunch is **Mozy** ([mozy.com](http://mozy.com)), which gives you two gigabytes of free

storage. After downloading and installing the software, you tell the program which files you want protected. From then on, Mozy will make frequent updates (files are encrypted for security) while your computer is idle. Mozy also offers unlimited storage for \$5 a month.



# Jeannette WALLS

G+

Jeannette Walls, the gossip columnist for *MSNBC.com*, has a past she'd probably turn into an item, if it weren't her own. As a child raised by an alcoholic father and an unstable mom, Walls often went without heat or indoor plumbing, and scavenged food from trash bins. Now 44, she tells all in her compelling new memoir, *The Glass Castle*.

**Your memoir has no bitterness in it. How'd you forgive your parents?**  
I don't think there's anything to forgive. I spent a lot of time with them, talking, reading, looking at the stars, living an adventure. Even though it had a dark side, a lot of it was fun.

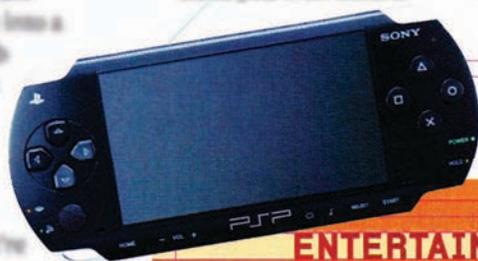
**Without your past, do you think you could have achieved so much?**  
Absolutely not. It turned me into a fearless scrapper. I have a job where I ask people the most obnoxious questions, and nobody intimidates me.

**Why gossip?**  
Telling the truth about somebody doesn't mean you're trying to humiliate them. You just want the real story, the scoop. It's ironic that it took me so long to figure out the scoop about myself.

**Where are your parents now?**  
My father died of a heart attack ten years ago, and my mother is homeless, living in

New York City. I write about a time some years ago when I looked out of my cab window and saw her scrounging through a Dumpster. I felt humiliated, but no matter how many times I've tried to help her, she's refused.

**What led you to write the book?**  
All my life, I was looking for a physical and emotional home. It's only recently that I've found that. Also, my husband practically duct-taped me to the desk and said, "You've got to write this."  
**How does it feel to get it all out?**  
Like I'm naked. For so long I thought, "Nobody who finds out will speak to me again." But I've been flabbergasted by the extent to which telling the truth can bond you with others. —CAROLYN HURT



GEAR WE LOVE

## ENTERTAINMENT TO GO

Guys like to think they're the gadget-loving gender, so they'll be reliably impressed when you whip out your new Sony PSP. The portable offshoot of the PlayStation offers addictive video games, sure, but the purse-sized entertainment center also plays high-quality movies and music. The sleek little gadget boasts a widescreen display, stereo speakers and a wireless radio for communicating with other PSPs or wireless networks, so you can download information on the go. Watch it and weep, boys. (Price to be announced, [www.playstation.com](http://www.playstation.com)) —L.S.

## THE SCIENCE OF SUCCESS

In her forties, Anne Archer perfected the put-upon wife, from her Oscar-nominated turn as the ever-faithful (too-faithful?) spouse in *Fatal Attraction* to playing Harrison Ford's other half, Dr. Cathy Ryan, in two Tom Clancy flicks. Now 57, Archer is finally getting parts that crackle with life, from her 2001 stint as Mrs. Robinson on the West End to two recent, raucy TV roles (as a seductress on *Boston Public* and a "crazy party-girl" mother on *The L Word*). This month, she plays a wry English-lit professor in the movie *Man of the House*.

Not that these parts have come easily, even after the success of *Attraction*. "I've had a lifetime of downtime," she says. "Acting's 99 percent rejection. But there just wasn't anything else I could do."



Archer's plenty busy for now. She's currently in the sleeper hit *Uncle Sam*, and plays Courteney Cox's mom in the upcoming *November*. Then there's life with her husband of 26 years, producer/director Terry Jastrow. Archer chalks their success up to Scientology. "I've talked around the topic for years, because people don't like to hear about it. But I've been a Scientologist for 25 years and I'm tired of ducking around it."

—GENIE MILLER

WALLS: GUY LAWRENCE; ARCHER: JEFFREY MATHIAS

# ROCK STAR

JOY ROSE

We asked Rose, 48, lead singer of *Houseslaves* on Prozac and mother of four, to croon about May's Mamapalooza rock fest.

**What's the idea behind Mamapalooza?**

It's about re-creating motherhood as a much larger, cooler, sexier, more intelligent and empowered vision of who we can be. It's our rebel movement.

**What can people expect at Mamapalooza this year?** In New York, there will be five events this month. The other cities—D.C., Detroit, Dallas, San Francisco and Nashville—will feature Mum Rock, craftswomen, artists, poets and comics. It's celebratory.

**Who will be performing?** On May 19, we'll premiere all of the new Mum Rockers. The main event on May 25 will include *Houseslaves*, The Mydolls, MotherLode Trio, Placenta, and more. [For complete lineups, go to [mamapalooza.com](http://mamapalooza.com)]

**What's next?**

I believe there will be a Mum Rock movie—you know, *Rocky Horror* meets *Carol Brady*—except I'd be played by Michelle Pfeiffer. —JENNIFER HOPPE



## SHOW HER THE MONEY

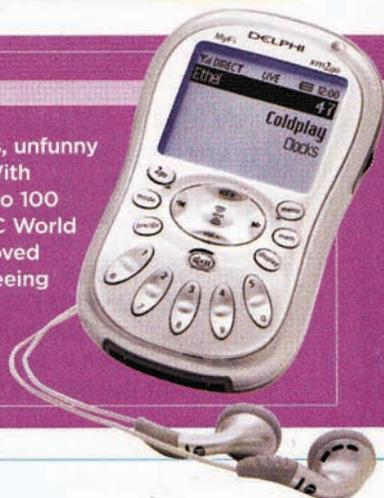
CARLY FIORINA'S \$42-MILLION DOLLAR GOLDEN HANDSHAKE FROM HP SHOWS THAT WOMEN ARE FINALLY EXITING THE BOARDROOM AS WELL-SET AS THEIR MALE COUNTERPARTS

				
<b>NAME</b> Carly Fiorina, 50	Rebecca Mark, 50	Jill Barad, 54	Linda J. Wachner, 59	Nina Aversano, 60
<b>COMPANY</b> Hewlett-Packard	Enron	Mattel	Warnaco	Lucent
<b>TITLE</b> CEO (1999-2005)	Vice Chairman and Director (1996-2000)	CEO (1997-2000)	Chairman and CEO (1988-2001)	President, Service Provider Networks Group (1999-2004)
<b>HIGH POINT</b> Being named CEO of the 7th largest corporation in the U.S.	Built \$20 billion worth of overseas power facilities.	Updating Barbie, solidified her standing as the world's most popular toy.	Earning \$3 million per year plus stock options worth close to \$100 million.	Becoming Lucent's top sales executive.
<b>REASON FOR LEAVING</b> Her \$19 billion acquisition of Compaq resulted in major losses.	The Enron management scandal (though she played no part in it).	Buying the Learning Company for \$3.6 billion, resulting in a \$400 million loss.	Wachner sold to bulk stores like Costco; Calvin Klein sued; Warnaco filed for bankruptcy.	Made headlines as a whistle-blower, but was in turn accused by the SEC of misleading investors.
<b>PAIN KILLER</b> \$42 million.	\$79-\$83 million in Enron stock, which she sold.	\$47 million, not including options.	\$252,000 plus \$3.5 million in stock.	Fought for \$3 million; final settlement remains a secret.
<b>EXIT STRATEGY</b> Selling her yacht while considering politics.	Living on a ranch in Texas, New Mexico, with her adopted son from Kazakhstan.	Working for charities and sitting on corporate boards.	Living the good life in the Hamptons.	Started an eponymous consulting firm.
				—REBECCA ADLER

### GEAR WE LOVE

#### HEAVENLY SOUNDS

If you haven't tossed your old AM/FM radio—and the ads, unfunny DJs and endless repeats of "American Idiot"—it's time. With Delphi's MyFi portable XM receiver, you can now tune into 100 plus channels of top-40 hits, stand-up comedy, even BBC World Service, without being chained to home or the car. We loved pulling in hours of music we'd never heard before, and seeing the name of the artist and track displayed onscreen. Coolest feature? If there's a show you don't want to miss, it records five hours of programming. Let's see your radio do that (\$350, [www.delphi.com](http://www.delphi.com)).—LES SHU



AUTOMOTIVE

# Wonder Wheels

Bluetooth? Check. DVD? Check. GPS with real-time traffic? Of course. Behold the most high-tech cars of the year.

by Les L. Shu



## HIGH TECH RIDES

### Acura RL

Starting at \$49,300 [www.acura.com](http://www.acura.com)

Before Lexus and Infiniti, there was Acura, the first Japanese luxury brand exported to the United States. Acura's flagship, the RL, is chock full of creature tech comforts you won't find in many of the company's other offerings. From real-time traffic to satellite radio, the RL is the ultimate luxury sedan.

**CLIMATE-CONTROL SYSTEM** Climate control is nothing new in luxury cars, but the RL takes it to the next level. Using GPS and a solar sensor, the system locates the position of the sun relative to the car's occupants and adjusts the interior temperature to compensate for outdoor conditions.

**HANDSFREELINK** This system connects the vehicle's audio system to a Bluetooth phone and allows the driver to dial a number by voice, avoiding any distractions that could potentially take your eyes off of the road or hands off of the wheel.

**ACURA NAVIGATION SYSTEM** In addition to maps and points of interest, this nav system features AcuraLink, which provides real-time traffic and rerouting recommendations using XM's satellite service, as well as satellite-based communication between your car and Acura. Maps are displayed on an eight-inch screen, and voice activation guides you turn by turn to your destination.

**ACURA/BOSE TEN-SPEAKER SURROUND SOUND SYSTEM** The RL is a concert hall with this system that includes a six-disc changer that plays DVD-Audio and MP3 discs. The DTS surround sound receiver has XM radio built-in, and Acura includes one year of XM service.

**ONSTAR** For peace of mind, OnStar gives you access to security and safety services no matter where you go—24 hours a day.

**HOMELINK** Home automation fans take note. Open the garage door and turn on your home's lighting before you even pull up to the driveway with this remote system.

## HIGH TECH RIDES



### Subaru B9 Tribeca Limited

Starting at \$30,694 [www.subaru.com](http://www.subaru.com)

Many car makers have flooded the market with SUVs in recent years, but very few have actually delivered. Subaru's B9 Tribeca is an exception. This all-wheel-drive vehicle earned the highest safety rating from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, five stars for frontal and side-impact crash tests, and four stars for rollovers. With your mind at ease, you can concentrate on the high-tech amenities you'll find inside the 2007 edition, which goes on sale this summer.

**AUDIO SYSTEM** All models come prewired for XM satellite radio, so adding this option is a snap. An auxiliary jack enables drivers to connect an iPod or other MP3 player to play music through the B9 Tribeca's speakers.

**REAR VISION CAMERA** This is the latest addition to the optional navigation system. When you shift the B9 Tribeca Limited into reverse, the LCD switches to the rear camera and shows what is behind the vehicle. The optional Reverse Assist Sensors sound off as you get closer to objects that are behind you.

**REMOTE STARTER** In a hurry? Start the car from up to 800 feet away with the push of a button, perfect for warming the car during brutal winters (or cooling it down in 90-degree heat).

**DVD ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM** A rear-seat DVD entertainment system is available on seven-passenger models. The system includes a nine-inch LCD and a DVD player with AV inputs for cameras, camcorders, and game systems. You can also add a remote control and two sets of wireless headphones.



## HIGH TECH RIDES



### Honda Civic Hybrid

Starting at \$23,350 [www.honda.com](http://www.honda.com)

As high fuel prices continue to dominate the news, hybrid vehicles keep gaining popularity. Those turned off by the geeky design and small size of early hybrids will be happy to know that some well-known, top-selling car models are now getting the hybrid treatment. The Civic is already one of Honda's most fuel-efficient vehicles; with the Hybrid, you get an EPA city/highway estimate of 49/51 miles per gallon (compared to 30/40 for the regular sedan with automatic transmission).

**AUDIO SYSTEM** The Civic Hybrid comes with a six-speaker, 160-watt CD system that's XM radio ready. It's also compatible with MP3 and WMA discs. Upgrade options include an eight-disc changer and Honda's iPod Music Link, which allows the audio system to control and recharge your favorite white or black player. Don't have an iPod? Honda includes an auxiliary port to connect other portable music devices.

**NAVIGATION** Just because it's a compact sedan doesn't mean it can't have luxury options like GPS navigation. Manufactured by Alpine, this system features voice control and a motorized 6.5-inch display.

**DIGITAL AUDIO CARD READER** Owners of the latest multimedia cell phones will love this feature. Essentially a PC Card slot, the card reader allows you to play digital music files right off of your memory card with a PC Card adapter. The reader supports MP3 and WMA files.

**SPEED-SENSITIVE VOLUME CONTROL** As your speed increases and the car gets louder, the audio system automatically compensates by adjusting the volume.



## HIGH TECH RIDES



### Dodge Ram SRT-10

Starting at \$47,605 (Regular Cab), \$51,810 (Quad Cab) [www.dodge.com](http://www.dodge.com)

Why do you need the fastest truck on the road? Just because. With a Viper V10 engine (yes, that Dodge Viper), you'll feel the 500-horsepower pushing you from 0 to 60 in five seconds. The six-speed manual transmission gives you sports car control, while the quad-cab version with automatic transmission gives you sedan-like seating for a small family.

**RED STARTER BUTTON** Nothing else says this truck is a race car at heart more than a push-button starter.

**UCONNECT** Make handsfree calls with your Bluetooth cell through the Ram's Uconnect feature. Forget headsets; you can have a conversation through the mic in the rear-view mirror and the audio system's speakers. Uconnect recognizes up to seven handsets (one at a time).

**DVD-BASED NAVIGATION RADIO** Using voice commands, the GPS navigation system gives you turn-by-turn instructions to your destination. You can also view a full-color map with the 5.8-inch display. The system features voice guidance, five routing methods (such as shortest route and freeway routes), automatic rerouting, plus information on longitude, latitude, and altitude.

**REAR VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM** In the quad cab version of the SRT-10, a rear video entertainment system is available to entertain the kids. The overhead DVD player includes a seven-inch LCD, a remote, and two sets of wireless headphones. Auxiliary jacks let you hook up a game console or a portable music player to the unit.

**SIRIUS-READY AUDIO SYSTEM** Get your Howard Stern fix while you rocket down the Interstate.



# Geek Your Ride

Make those road trips more fun with one of these ten tech upgrades.

## GPS

### BUDGET

#### Lowrance iWay 350c

If you want a full-featured navigator, but don't want to spend a bundle, the iWay 350c is a good buy. Voted as one of the best new products at last year's SEMA show, the 350c features a

3.5-inch touchscreen and turn-by-turn directions. Loaded on the 4GB hard drive are maps of the U.S. and Canada. Plus, the iWay plays music and displays photos stored on SD Cards. A built-in FM transmitter streams music or voice directions through your car's radio.

**\$499;**  
[www.lowrance.com](http://www.lowrance.com)



### SPLURGE

#### Alpine Blackbird

Based on Windows CE, the Blackbird portable navigation device offers turn-by-turn voice instructions and uses NAVTEQ's maps of the U.S. and Canada. What sets the Blackbird apart from similar devices is its subscription service to real-time traffic, so that you can easily reroute your travel plans if there's a traffic snarl ahead of you. Alpine preloads the 4GB hard drive comes with maps, and the device doubles as a music player by accessing MP3 and WMA files on SD Cards. The 3.6-inch screen uses light sensors to adjust screen brightness.

**\$750;** [www.alpine-usa.com](http://www.alpine-usa.com)



## Entertainment

### BUDGET

#### JVC KD-DV5100 DVD/CD Receiver

Want to watch DVDs in your car but not quite ready (or willing) to drop a grand on a system? Try building it piece by piece. Start with JVC's DVD/CD receiver, an in-dash unit that plays DVDs and MP3/WMA CDs. The system features video out, so you can connect it to a rear fold-down or in-headrest monitor. The KD-DV5100 is also Sirius ready, so you can add satellite radio to the setup when your budget allows.

**\$330;** [www.jvc.com](http://www.jvc.com)



### SPLURGE

#### Jensen Intellicar ICNAVDINPC

If you've always wanted to put a computer into your car, now you can. Jensen's new Intellicar series is a collection of in-dash units that provide the ultimate in in-car entertainment and connectivity. The ICNAVDINPC is a Windows XP Home unit that features satellite navigation and Bluetooth phone compatibility, and fits into any standard single DIN dash opening. Standard specs include a 1-GHz processor, a 40GB hard drive, 512MB of RAM, and a DVD drive; the unit also sports Ethernet, S-Video, USB, printer, and serial connections. The Intellicar plays DVD and CD discs without booting into Windows; add the optional seven-inch touchscreen for a mere \$700.

**\$1,699;** [www.audiovox.com](http://www.audiovox.com)



## iPod Car Kits

### BUDGET

#### Belkin TuneBase FM for iPod

Belkin's TuneBase FM combines a high-quality FM transmitter with a car charger, making it easy to hear your tunes through your car's stereo while keeping your iPod or iPod nano fully juiced. The device features four programmable preset buttons so that you can easily find the best frequency and quickly toggle among the ones you use most often. Thanks to the TuneBase's flexible steel neck, drivers can reposition their iPods with little effort. Belkin includes tray adapters for various iPod models.

**\$79;** [www.belkin.com](http://www.belkin.com)



### SPLURGE

#### Harman Kardon Drive + Play

For true iPod integration in your car, install Harman Kardon's Drive + Play. The system, which works with all iPods with docks, consists of three units: a large screen that shows the familiar iPod interface (which can be mounted anywhere for easy viewing), a controller that mimics the iPod's Scroll Wheel (which can be placed by the shifter to enable easy access), and a "brain" that connects and powers all of the devices. Have an installer connect the Drive + Play to your car's audio system, and your auto will be ready to blast your playlists.

**\$199;** [www.harmankardon.com](http://www.harmankardon.com)

## Bluetooth Kits

### BUDGET

#### Jabra SP500

The SP500 is a standalone speakerphone designed for hands-free use while driving. The device pairs with Bluetooth phones meeting the 1.2 spec, and features noise-canceling technology so that your phone conversations are as clear as possible. The device is smart enough to adjust the volume automatically based on how noisy the environment is, so you won't have to do any fiddling while driving.

**\$99;** [www.jabra.com](http://www.jabra.com)



### SPLURGE

#### Motorola BLNC Bluetooth Car Kit IHF1000

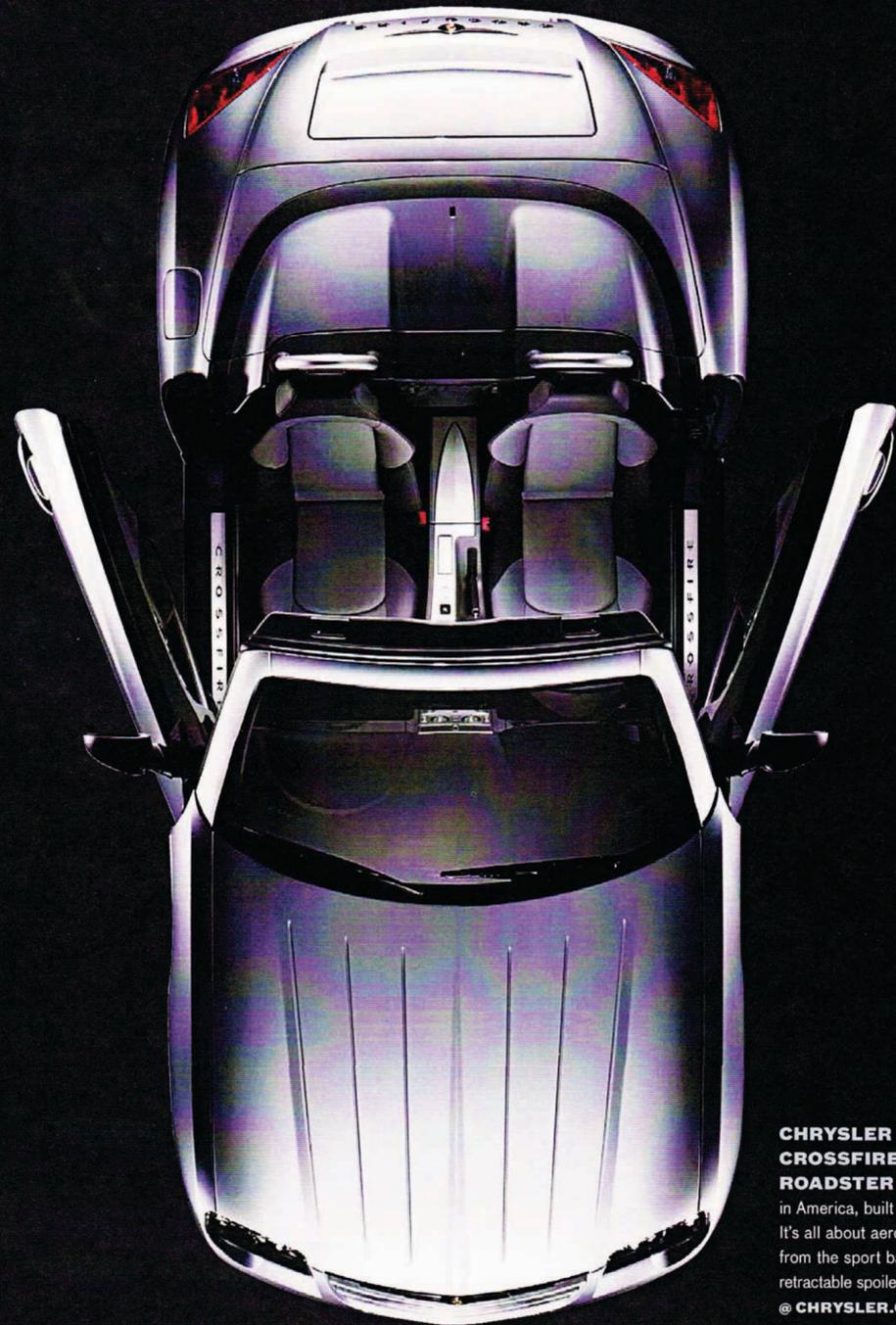
Push a button on Motorola's slick Bluetooth car kit and you can control the unit by voice commands. The BLNC IHF1000 pairs with most Bluetooth phones that support handsfree profiles, and it recognizes up to four different phones at once. It also features a voice-announced caller ID, so you won't have to glance at your phone to see who's calling. The BLNC is installed in your car for true Bluetooth integration (professional installation may be required). Motorola has built in superb sound quality and noise reduction of up to 21 decibels.

**\$299;** [www.motorola.com](http://www.motorola.com)



# Topless Hotties

This summer, satisfy your need for speed and lust for style while stripping off the top and displaying the goods. With a roadster for any budget, nothing should stop you from getting a little wild. **BY LES SHU**



**CHRYSLER CROSSFIRE ROADSTER** Designed in America, built in Germany. It's all about aerodynamics, from the sport bars to the retractable spoiler. **\$34,960 @ CHRYSLER.COM**



**NISSAN 350Z ROADSTER**  
The latest version of the Z pumps out 287 horses. **\$33,850 @ NISSANUSA.COM**



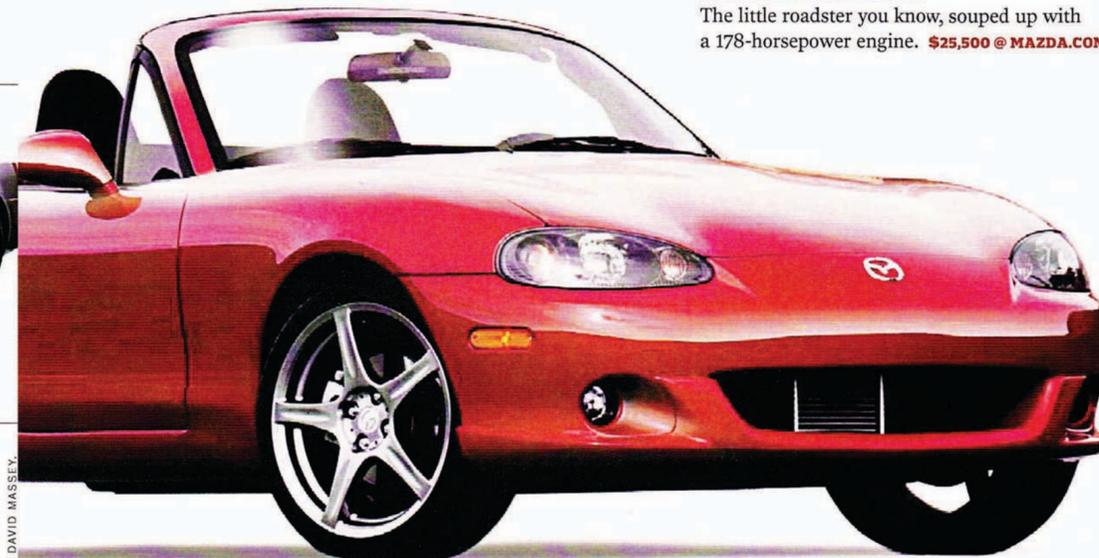
**BMW 645CI CONVERTIBLE**  
The sportiest sun-lover on the lot comes with a stabilization system to help with tight turns. **\$76,995 @ BMWUSA.COM**



**TOYOTA SOLARA CONVERTIBLE**  
A four-seater with a powerful V6, 225-horsepower power plant. **\$25,950 @ TOYOTA.COM**



**CADILLAC XLR**  
No fabric here: A hardtop retracts in less than 30 seconds. **\$75,385 @ CADILLAC.COM**



**MAZDA MAZDASPEED MX-5 MIATA**  
The little roadster you know, souped up with a 178-horsepower engine. **\$25,500 @ MAZDA.COM**



**MINI COOPER CONVERTIBLE**  
The tiny terror not only gets the drop-top treatment, it's also got a sliding roof. **\$21,000 (EST.) @ MINIUSA.COM**



**CHRYSLER PT CRUISER CONVERTIBLE**  
This retro-styled ragtop features a sport bar to reduce wind noise. **\$19,995 @ CHRYSLER.COM**



**MITSUBISHI ECLIPSE SPYDER GS**  
This V6 offers automatic clutch-less shifting. **\$25,399 @ MITSUBISHICARS.COM**

PREVIOUS PAGES: TYPE DESIGN: KEV JENKINS. PHOTO BY DAVID MASSEY.

LIFESTYLE

**GREAT RACK**

Turn the garage into their favorite room of the house



**[1] Yakima Systems IGM [Integrated Gear Management] Rack**  
Dad will finally ditch his old pegboard for this slick new customizable organization system. It's got a hanger for almost any tool—no toy. \$249 @ YAKIMA.COM

**[2] Atlas Frontier 35-inch Snowshoes**  
They're not snowshoes, but Gramps can still charge down the hill with these snowshoes. They're the lightest snowshoes with a built-in gripper for bear-tooth-like grip. \$229 @ ATLASNOWSHOE.COM

**[3] Global Surf Industries NSP 5'4" Fish**  
The sleek, high-performance "fish" shape rides like a surfboard. Perfect for students and pipeline masters—this is the perfect gift to get your girlfriend in a hot, hot way. \$199 @ GLOBALSURFINDUSTRIES.COM (SHOWN WITH DAKINE LEASH \$23 @ DAKINE.COM)

**[4] MBS Comp 16 Mountainboard**  
It's the perfect mix of skateboard and snowboard—the perfect gift for the carver, air-catcher, and daredevil of the downhill daredevil on your list. \$470 @ MBS.COM

**[5] Forum Division 158 Snowboard and Forum Team Bindings**  
When you're a true friend, you pick out the hippest brands in the snow. BOARD, \$480; BINDINGS, \$170 (PER PAIR) @ FORUM-SNOWBOARDS.COM

**[6] Cannondale Synapse Carbon 1 DuraAce**  
Your kid brother will worship you when you surprise him with a cutting-edge carbon bike. It's lighter than an average skateboard! \$4,400 @ CANNONDALE.COM

**[7] Kamik Centigrade Boots**  
These boots will keep your boss' feet warm in temps as low as -50. That'll help keep him on the road and out of your hair. \$110 @ KAMIK.COM

**[8] Jackson Super Hero Freestyle Kayak**  
The water rat in your family will love this 8'6", 39-pound white-water monster. The seat is even equipped with shock absorbers, so he or she will survive the steepest of waterfalls. \$995 @ JACKSONKAYAK.COM

For information on how to "Win It," see mensfitness.com/giftguide.

MFI'S WHAT TO GIVE YOUR FAMILY GUIDE

**Get Your Give On**

We've brought together the best holiday loot—something for everyone on your list. But be careful—this stuff's so lust worthy, you may end up keeping it for yourself.

BY TYLER GRAY AND LES SHU  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHAGO AKI-BUA AND BRIAN JONES

**THE TRAILBLAZER**

Wrap up these gadgets, and your family will always remember you—wherever their adventures take them



**[1] National Geographic Ultimate Travel Sport Coat**  
It's weatherproof and loaded with storage—ideal for helping your bro stash his finds. \$150 @ NCTRAVELSHOP.COM

**[2] Wenger Evo 18** For Gramps, a pocket-size toolbox. \$49 @ WENGERNA.COM

**[3] Tumi Deluxe Adaptor Kit**  
Let your boss use his laptop, phone charger, and more overseas. \$95 @ TUMI.COM

**[4] SIRIUS S50** Give Mom the power to pick from 120 satellite radio stations or

record 50 hours of programming. \$360 (\$13/MONTH) @ SIRIUS.COM

**[5] Garmin iQue M3** PDA meets GPS in this gadget, ensuring Dad will never get lost again. \$499 @ GARMIN.COM

**[6] Panoptx Diablo Sunglasses**  
Your bud will love these polarized shades that become goggles with the click of an insert. \$195 @ PANOPTX.COM

**[7] Logitech Wireless Headphones** Free your sis from iPod bondage with these "phones, which feature cordless controls and crystal clear tone. \$150 @ LOGITECH.COM

**[8] Breitling Navitimer Pops** will feel like an ace with this authentic pilot's watch (the dial even calculates flight plans!). \$4,250 @ BREITLING.COM

**[9] Kodak EasyShare-One**  
Get your girl to e-mail naughty pictures using Kodak's handy Wi-Fi cam. \$599 @ KODAK.COM

**[10] Logitech Wireless Headphones** Free your sis from iPod bondage with these "phones, which feature cordless controls and crystal clear tone. \$150 @ LOGITECH.COM

PHOTOGRAPHER: DAVID KAGAN/MIKE EDWARDS

**HOME SWEET HOME**

Update your family's pad with these modern conveniences



**[1] HP Pavilion s7200 Slimline PC**  
This small PC has enough power for Pops to work on his taxes well into 2010. Get him a flat-panel monitor to go with it. Even Dad doesn't want a hulking monolith on his desk. PC STARTS AT \$450; V517 17-INCH MONITOR, \$330 @ HP.COM

**[2] Sharp Superheated Steam Oven**  
Fact: Mom hates crappy gifts like vacuum cleaners—think diamonds, damn it, diamonds! But this is an exception: Sharp's new oven grills, bakes, roasts, and reheats with the power of steam, making it something every time-starved, calorie-conscious individual can appreciate. Just think of the meals she'll make for you. \$1,400 @ SHARPUSA.COM

**[3] Krups XP4050 Espresso Maker** Make foalproof cappuccino at the touch of a button. And if

Nana would rather avoid a coffee-ground disaster on her floor, she can simply pop in a premeasured coffee pod for instant java. \$300 @ KRUPS.COM

**[4] Satek A-200 Speaker**  
Whether he's listening to Good Charlotte or watching *Battlestar Galactica* for the hundredth time, the sound from the A-200 is crisp with bass that booms. \$99 @ SAITEKUSA.COM

**[5] Vtech ip8100**  
Your sister is a talker. So give her a broadband Internet phone that saves her cash. And if she lives in Canada or Puerto Rico, all her calls to you are free when she signs up for the unlimited

"won't shut up" plan. \$100 @ VTECH.COM; VONAGE SERVICE, \$15-\$25 @ VONAGE.COM

**[6] Olympus P-11 Photo Printer**  
Your girlfriend already has a digital camera—so why not pair it with the Olympus P-11, one of the best 4x6 printers on the market? Never having to go to the photo lab ever again: priceless. \$150 @ OLYMPUSA.COM

**[7] Fuji FinePix Z1 Camera**  
Get detailed 5-megapixel shots from this compact, easy-to-use digicam—perfect for Grandpa to keep a detailed record of the family or simply snoot on the neighborhood. \$350 @ FUJIFILM.COM

**THE TOY ROOM**

Give them all tricked-out toys—then make them share



**[1] Xbox 360** Be the supercool bud that you are by giving him the next-generation Xbox. Games have high-definition graphics, and Xbox Live lets him chat with his frat brothers worldwide. \$299-\$399 @ XBOX.COM

**[2] Logic3 PSP Stereo** Your sister uses a PSP to watch movies on her commute. Give her the full cinematic experience with these speakers that snap onto the unit. \$80 @ LOGIC3.COM; \$250 @ US.PLAYSTATION.COM

**[3] Rock Crawler RC Truck**  
It's so big, a little guy can practically ride in it. It climbs rocks, rules the playground, and eats his little friends' wimpy RC cars like hors d'oeuvres. \$150 @ FUNRISE.COM

**[4] Joytech Williams F1 Racing Wheel** For the armchair driver who thinks he's Michael Andreoli, this wheel gives racing games that realistic feel—and, hey, maybe it'll help improve his real-life driving skills as well. \$90 @ JOYTECH.NET

**[5] MSN TV 2**  
Grandma thinks computers are the devil. So ease her into the modern age with a device that'll let her surf the Web using her television. \$200 @ MSNTV.COM

**[6] iDog**  
This pooch pumps out music through a built-in speaker (connected to any audio source) and can shake his head to the tunes. Let's see Sparty do that. \$30 @ HASBROTOYSHOP.COM

**[7] Atari Flashback 2**  
He used to kick your ass in *Asteroids*. Show Dad how far you—and technology—have come by giving him 40 of his old-school favorites, plus joystick, in one familiar box. \$30 @ ATARI.COM

## Gear:in the kitchen

### Osterizer Classic Beehive Blender

A retro look, two speeds, and a tough steel blade are trademarks of this great liquidizer. Pair it with the optional Blend-N-Go Cup (\$15) that lets you whip up a shake and sip it on the road. \$90 @ oster.com



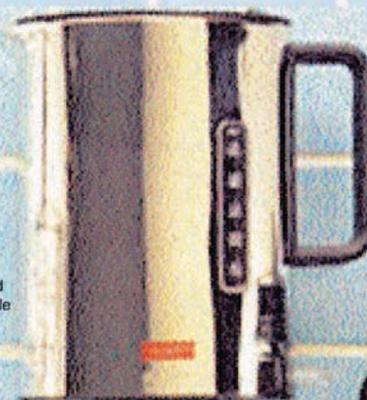
### KitchenAid Chrome Food Processor

Spend less time chopping with this sleek processor. With its big 12-cup bowl and a selection of blades, you can make enough guacamole to last an entire week. \$200 @ cooking.com



### Bodum Ibis

When a recipe calls for hot water, the stainless steel Ibis stands ready. Sure, you can zap water in the microwave, but handles get hot and there's always the chance of spilling and burning yourself—while this kettle stays cool to the touch. \$80 @ bodumusa.com



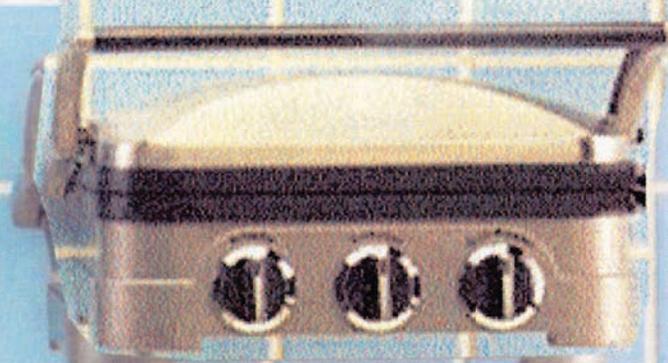
### Krups Citrus Juicer

This juicer will turn all your citrus into fresh-squeezed goodness. The motor rotates in dual directions, ensuring as much juice as possible is extracted. A filter helps remove pulp, while the 30-ounce container has plenty of room to store all the juice. \$50 @ krups.com



# Counter Intelligence { By Les Shu }

Five appliances that'll help cut your time in the kitchen



### Cuisinart Griddler

The Foreman is fine, but the Griddler takes indoor grilling to the next level. Use it either as a grill, griddle, or sandwich maker. Grease and oil are channeled away after cooking, helping keep meals lean and healthy. \$130 @ cooking.com

STYLIST: KATJA GREEFF

**Callaway Golf FT-3 Driver**

Unleash your inner pro—or just look like one. (Greens queen Annika Sorenstam used this club in six major wins.) With a large titanium face, it's ideal for helping you swing for greater accuracy and distance. \$500 @ callawaygolf.com

# Spring Into Action

Get equipped with this female-friendly sporting gear *by Les Shu*

**Therm-a-Rest Women's ProLite 4**

Women's bodies tend to lose heat faster than men's—but with this insulated camping mattress, that's no longer a problem. Go ahead and strap it to your pack—it's so light, you won't even notice it. \$90 @ thermarest.com

**Adidas 1**

The shoe with a brain—while you run, a sensor and motor inside the sneaker's sole monitor your pace, softening or firming the padding to properly cushion your feet. \$250 @ adidas.com

**Brooks HVAC Pulse Seamless**

This top has silver woven right into the fabric, but it's not a fashion statement. The metal helps to both regulate body temperature and reduce odor during even the most hardcore activity. \$98 @ brooksrunning.com

**Wilson W4 in Cobalt Storm**

Wilson's W racquets offer more than a pretty design. The company uses nanotechnology to add strength to the extremely lightweight frame. Longer strings also provide a larger sweet spot. \$230 @ wilson.com



# eclectic collector

■ ■ A LIVELY COMPENDIUM OF ART, ANTIQUES, FURNITURE, AND STYLISH FINDS BY LES SHU



**W**ith exuberant colors, tropical spirit, and sensuality, works by contemporary artists from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa are surging in popularity. "Some of the most exciting art today is coming out of Africa and Latin America," says Loris Crawford, executive producer of the third annual Art Off The Main, a showcase of painting, drawing, sculpture, and photography. "There's an extra level of creativity. A lot of these artists don't have the luxury of an art store, so they make do with what they have: cloth, cotton, trees, and vegetables." Among the treasures on view is "La Espera," 2006 (left), an oil-on-canvas by Cuban painter Sandro de la Rosa.

■ **Art Off The Main: The Show of Contemporary African, Caribbean and Latin American Art, The Puck Building, 295 Lafayette St., 473-8649, Oct. 5-8**

## Native Talent

Deep in the Darien rain forest of Panama, a group of Wounaan Indian women construct intricate baskets out of hand-dyed palm leaves and fibers from Chunga and Nagualo trees using a painstaking technique that's been passed from mother to daughter for generations. "They are the finest and most technically sophisticated baskets in the world," says Geoffrey Orley, a Persian rug dealer whose passion for these "collectible masterpieces"

prompted him to charter a plane into the rain forest, then canoe for 12 hours until he reached the indigenous artisans in their remote village. The weaving is "as fine as snake-skin," he explains, "and great care is placed in balancing form with vivid decoration and coloring." Motifs are tribal, yet surprisingly contemporary, and each basket is a work-in-progress for up to two years.

■ **Orley and Shabahang, 520 W. 23rd St., 1-646-383-7511**



*For further details, more collecting options, and art-related events, turn to "Art & Collectibles" (p. 66).*

**X MORE NOW**

THE EMMY-WINNING CREATOR OF THE DRAMA **JOAN OF ARCADIA** IS HAVING HER OWN RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AS LEAD SINGER AND BASS GUITARIST IN THE L.A. BAND THE ENABLERS. BELOW, THE SOURCE OF HER DIVINE INSPIRATION.



**DON'T MISS**



Mark Macy, director of the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, reveals an artist best known for her work in theater and film. Included in our Perspectives is an exhibit which includes the art of Barbara Hall, along with her photographs at the Dallas Institute of Arts. And the exhibition of a book about Barbara Hall at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles is also available.

**barbara HALL**

MY LIFE IN MUSIC

**1960s** "My earliest memory of music was The Beatles. I was four and my brother was in a band. He and his friends brought Beatles songs home and I became obsessed."

**1970s** "When I was a teenager, all I wanted to do was talk with boys about Led Zeppelin and The Rolling Stones. Rock was weirdly devoid of women. If Chrissie Hynde had been around when I was 13 instead of 18, that's what I'd be doing now as a career."

**1980s** "Bruce Springsteen changed my life. I have a small-town, blue-collar background—nothing that had been part of the music I listened to. In college, I heard Springsteen for the

first time. The fact that he took his experience and made it so poetic made me realize I had to be a writer."

**1990s** "After graduation, I got serious about being a bluesgrass player. About six years ago, a friend and I started a bluesgrass roots duo, but I decided I wanted a whole band. That's The Enablers."

**Today** "We've just released an alternative country-rock CD called *Come Back Son*. It's like Wilco—if Wilco had a woman. I can't say enough about Wilco. I think [lead singer] Jeff Tweedy is a visionary. Patty Griffin's new album is also blowing my mind. I listen to music obsessively."

**X WHAT WOMEN WANT: SNOW JOBS**



For too long, female snowboarders have had to do their McTwists and Miller flips on a scaled-down version of equipment designed for men. This winter, we will no longer be adrift. With the help of top female pros, Burton, the world's biggest seller of snowboards, has designed a line of functional, funky, female-friendly gear. The Feather (top; \$350), the world's best-selling women's board, has been slightly tapered to allow for quicker turns. The Troop (middle; \$400) has extra maneuverability. And boarders will be on firm footing with the top-of-the-line Feelgood (bottom; \$500), which handles back-country rides and half-pipe tricks with ease ([www.burton.com](http://www.burton.com)).

—LES SHU

PHOTOS, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MICHAEL POWERS, CONTEMPORARY ARTS MUSEUM HOUSTON, GEOFFREY SOKOL

# Good Looks

CLOTHING | GROOMING | STYLE



Timepieces

## Wrist Action

Today's timepieces do two jobs—three if you count making you look good

**ANY PLASTIC CRACKER** Jack timepiece from the coin-op machine outside the 99-cent store can give you the time of day. But if you're going to wear that out on the town, you may as well wear a sundial on your wrist. And with today's advancements in gizmo wizardry, the watch you wear should do double duty: It not only has to look good, it should also serve a purpose. Maybe you need a watch that tracks your heart rate or the calories you're woofing down, or one that lights your way through the dark. Whatever. It isn't just time that is of the essence anymore.

**PREVIA CHRONO**  
(\$350) by ESQ

# Polish Your Online Image

Here's how to ensure that when a potential employer Googles your name, he likes what he sees

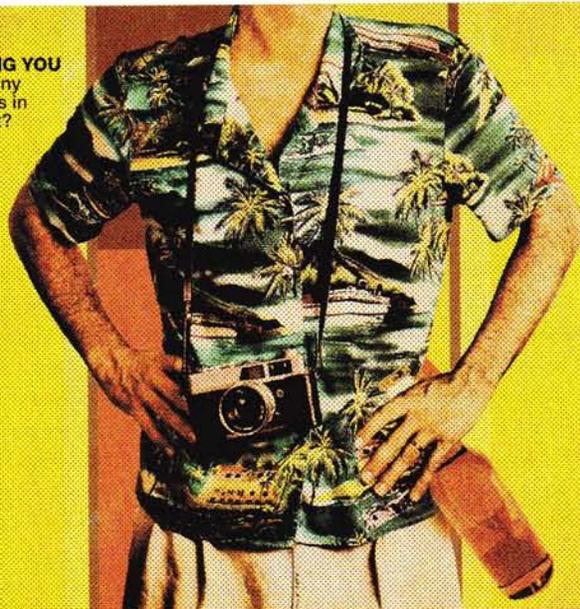
**W**hen an intriguing resume lands on your desk, you probably plug the name into Google to see what pops up. So the next time you launch a job search, you should expect to be search-engine fodder too. In a recent survey of 100 executive recruiters by *execunet.com*, a job-search site for executives, 77 percent of respondents said they use the Internet to uncover additional information about candidates. A third of those managers had eliminated applicants based on what they found. So while your work history might be spotless, a scandalous photo on *flickr.com*, an entry on *dontdatehimgirl.com*, or even an ill-advised political rant can get you blackballed. That is, unless you take a few steps to polish your online image.

**Start a blog.** If your career has put you in the public eye from time to time, you've probably garnered some negative press. An effective way to counter it: Start a blog. Google offers free start-up services at *blogger.com*. The idea here is to bury your detractors' slander. Blogs are endorsed by their authors and thus are more likely to show up first in search results, which are ranked in order of recent updates, originality, and authoritativeness. For the same reason, "Write articles for online publications and participate intelligently in discussion groups and online networks related to your work," says Rebecca Lieb, editor-in-chief of the ClickZ Network and its Web site, *searchenginewatch.com*. "If there's enough content about you that's positive, it will camouflage the negative."

**Create a Web folio.** That's Internet-speak for a simple Web site that exhibits your resume and accolades. Domain sellers like GoDaddy, Network Solutions, and Yahoo! Small Business all offer Web site creation services for about \$5 a month. Be sure to provide links to other sites that exhibit your accomplishments—this is especially important if those sites direct visitors to your home page. "One of the best ways to improve search results in your favor is to have other high-quality sites linked back to yours," says Lieb.

**Advertise yourself.** Visit any search engine and sign up for its "sponsored advertising" program. You won't pay anything unless someone searches for your name and clicks on your ad—which you can link to your Web folio or blog—and even then, it won't cost you more than a few cents (Google's minimum is a nickel per click). LES SHU

**THEY'RE SEARCHING YOU**  
Are there any e-skeletons in your closet?



RESUME

## ASK THE CAREER COACH

Insider advice for successful leadership

### My secretary dresses provocatively. How can I get her to tone it down?

Apply the strategy diplomats use when they're engaged in a conflict: Involve a neutral third party. In this case, that means human resources. Ask them to **create a memo about standards of dress** and, unless you like discrimination lawsuits, distribute it to all employees, male and female. If you work for a small company that has no HR department, you'll just have to write the memo yourself. Be sure to phrase it in an informational, nonconfrontational way. Then again, if you're friendly with anyone else in the secretarial pool, ask that person to talk to her for you. Sisterhood can be a powerful force, brother.

**DRESS CODE** Avoid temptation by enacting a cover-up.



### I do a lot of heavy lifting for my team. How can I get others to pitch in?

If you're the alpha bull, simply work on the one skill that has bolstered the success of leaders from Attila the Hun to Steve Jobs: artful delegation of duties. If you're not in a position to trumpet orders, **start offering your colleagues more credit for their participation** or invite them to lunch—on you. You'd be amazed how free food inspires cooperation in normally uncooperative people. As a last resort, start yelling. If nothing else, it will mark you for senior management.



Gil Schwartz is an executive vice president for a Fortune 500 company. Can Gil help you? Submit questions to [careercoach@rodale.com](mailto:careercoach@rodale.com).

# VIDEO GAMES

& ENTERTAINMENT

## The Sims: Bustin' Out

The Sims: Bustin' Out is a 3D action-adventure game that lets you play as a Sim who has been kidnapped and taken to a prison. Your goal is to escape the prison and return home. The game features a variety of puzzles and challenges that you must solve in order to progress through the story.



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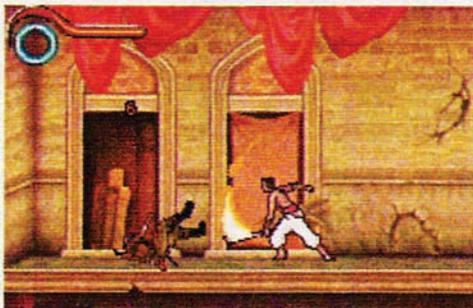


## Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time

The GBA version of Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time upholds the series' fun factor, and the 2D platform holds its own against the stunning 3D graphics of its console cousins. As this adventure begins, the prince is out pillaging a nearby kingdom when a mysterious booty, the sands of an hourglass, is mistakenly unleashed, giving both the prince and an evil vizier the power to control time. Now the prince must turn back the clock before his own kingdom crumbles.

Fans of the Broderbund classic will find the game similar to the old 2D side-scrolling original (and even to 2D Metroid games). The graphics are highly detailed, but the color is a bit dark, even with the GBA SP's front light on. POP is all about neat acrobatics and using them to accurately jump from ledges and climb up ropes. If you fall, you die instantly, and you usually continue a few levels back, forcing you to replay several difficult levels.

The key to survival is to use the Sands of Time. You pick up scrolls along the way that unlock new attributes, such as rewinding and slowing time, double jumping, and rebuilding objects. While rewinding time is a cool trick, you must be quick to use it before getting killed—and you must possess some sand before you can use it, which drains quickly. The levels are full of puzzles, and some levels require you to play two characters—the prince and the princess—simultaneously in order to assist one another in activating door switches. It can be tedious to baby-sit both characters, but the game otherwise guarantees hours of enjoyment, even if it's only to jump and flip around.—*Two-Fisted Shoe*



**PROTIP:** After knocking down a Sand Persian, absorb his sand by pushing B.



**PROTIP:** To beat this bad boy, load up with sand, press the L button, and slash away.

**T** ■ Developed and published by Ubisoft ■ \$29.99  
■ Available now ■ Platform ■ 1 player

	GRAPHICS	4.5	FUN FACTOR <b>4.0</b>
	SOUND	3.5	
	CONTROL	4.0	



# Shining Soul II

Sega's Shining Soul II offers more characters, prettier graphics, and more polished gameplay than the original...but Shining fans may still be somewhat disappointed by the game's similarity.

Players of the original will jump into the sequel easily. The four heroes of Shining Soul defeated the Dark Dragon. Fast-forward much later, and light has become too unstable, allowing darkness to rear its ugly head once again. With a choice of eight characters, you play as a next-generation hero fighting to preserve peace in this mythical land.

SSII has the look of an RPG; you power up as you gain experience points and collect items (the Item menu looks exactly like the original's), but there's more NES-Zelda-like action than there is role-playing as you hack-n-slash your way through. The map is large, but new areas are uncovered only when you defeat an area's master. While the game seems easy, the enemies—goblins, ghosts, and all that good stuff—get tough, especially when they gang up on you. As you develop your hero's strength and powers, however, you'll notice things smooth out.

The game doesn't stop when you enter the Item menu, so you are continuously hit as you equip your hero; fortunately, SSII retains the ease of switching weapons using the shoulder buttons. The color and graphics are much more refined, but SSII still suffers from the monotony that is its simplicity. (Things look up when you connect with other Game Boy Advances for four-player co-op.) Folks new to the Shining Soul series should skip the first and pick up this one, but those fans who expected more should wait for a third.—*Two-Fisted Shoe*



**PRO TIP:** Don't walk past secret rooms. If you notice a treasure chest hidden somewhere that's seemingly impossible to get to, try different paths or walk through walls to get inside.

**E** ■ Developed by Sega ■ Published by Atlus ■ \$29.99  
 ■ Available December ■ RPG ■ 4 players



**PRO TIP:** When your soul meter fills up, save it for boss encounters. Unleash the Soul Magic by pushing the Select button.

	GRAPHICS	4.0	FUN FACTOR <b>3.0</b>
	SOUND	3.0	
	CONTROL	3.0	

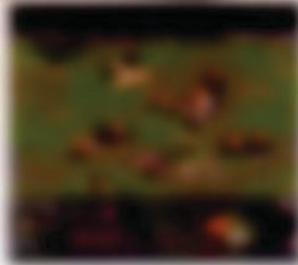
# Dragon Ball Z: Taitetsu

Dragon Ball Z: Taitetsu is a fighting game that brings the action of the anime to the Game Boy Advance. It features a variety of characters from the series, including Goku, Vegeta, and Piccolo. The game is set in a world where the forces of evil are once again on the rise, and it's up to the heroes to stop them. The game is a 2D fighting game, and it's designed to be a fun and accessible experience for fans of the series. It features a variety of moves and special attacks, and it's a great way to relive the excitement of the anime.



**Standard Message**

Standard message content area.



**Mobile Forces**

# Geist

Don't worry, no Patrick Swayze

Publisher  
Nintendo

Developer  
n-Space

Genre  
FPS

Release Date  
Winter

GCN



In most games, supernatural beings and ghosts are the baddies we battle. Nintendo turns the tables in *Geist*, in which *the players* are phantoms raising the willies out of people.

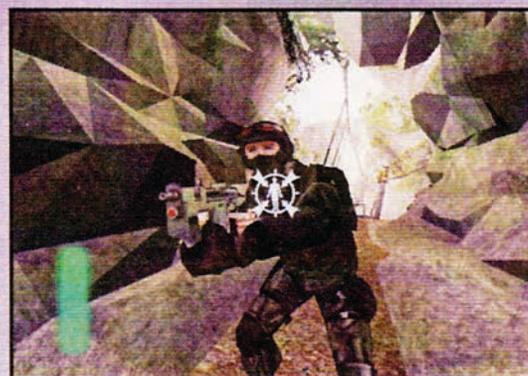
You are John Raimi, a wandering poltergeist with the ability to possess humans, animals, and objects. Raimi must uncover how he became this way. A government disease-control agent, he was sent to covertly investigate a shady corporation, only to be captured and have his spirit ripped from his body after the operation goes sour. Raimi haunts the corporation, determined to reunite with his body and uncover the secrets of the corporation.

The game begins with you as a ghost, and you must possess and de-possess in order to advance to different rooms. In spirit form, you move fast, are invisible, and can float through cracks and fences, but you can go only so far; much of the corporation is locked down with heavy doors. In one scene, you possess a temperature valve to overheat the pipes, which draws the attention of a guard. Scare the guard, and you can possess his body in order to enter new rooms (his memories get you where you need to go) and kill off other guards with his weapon. Or, you can scare and possess a dog to get through tight spaces. Some scenes require you to possess multiple bodies, so you must act fast or you'll find yourself trapped.

As a ghost, you have a life meter, as you're a partially living being, of sorts. While it's easy to possess bodies and blow your way out, much of the game involves stealth and strategy.

*Geist* is graphically satisfying, and offers an interesting mix of FPS and strategy. The included multiplayer component can accommodate up to four players. There's a chance all this possession business might become too repetitive, but we're hoping there are enough surprises in store to make us remember why we bought the Cube.

—LS



# Area 51

The truth: here?

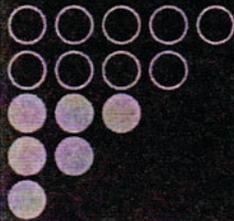
Publisher  
Midway

Developer  
Midway

Genre  
FPS

Release Date  
2004

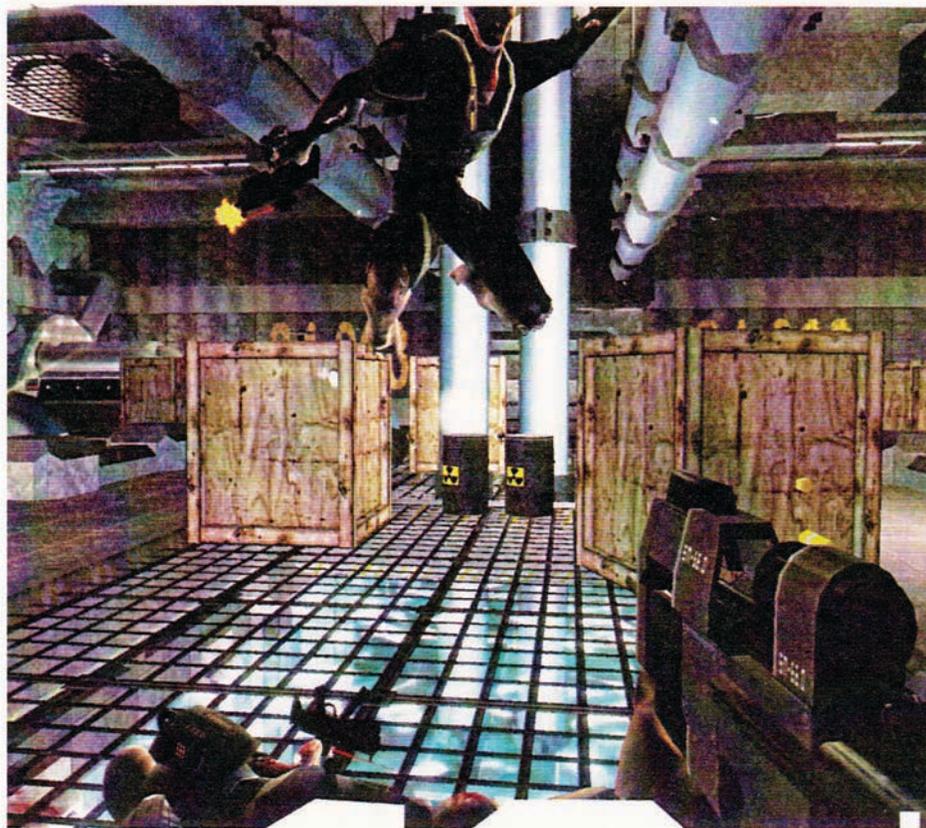
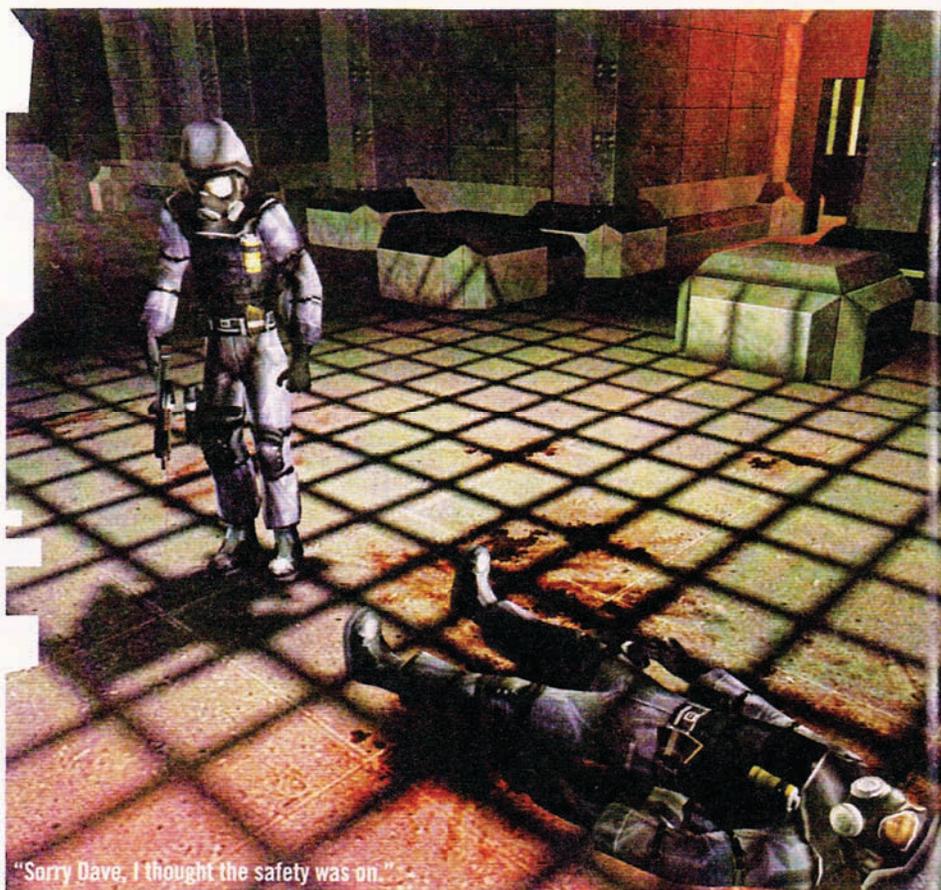
Buzz Meter



PS2 | Xbox

Forget Mars or some planetary ring in the future. Midway revisits an alien-infested place right in our backyard, *Area 51*. The first-person shooter for the Xbox and PS2 features an epic single-player mode, and multiplayer combat via system link or online play. Something bad has happened at Area 51—as it always

does—and we're not talking about some spy breaking in for sensitive data. As Lt. Nick Cross, a hazardous biological waste expert, you are sent in for a routine investigation—or so you



thought. Not only are there the cliched aliens to deal with, but you also become infected with a mutagen that turns you into something a Beverly Hills surgeon can't even fix. For your survival, and the world's, you must uncover what the hell is going on.

While the real Area 51 is shrouded in mystery, giving Midway leeway in terms of plot, the game sticks to the old alien vs. human theme and features a gameplay and story line not too different from *Half-Life*, *Halo*, or *Doom*. You guide Cross through the dark corridors of eight sections of the facility as he explores the alien's secrets (and those of his government), finds a cure for what's transforming him, and prevents the world from facing the same fate. Cross has access to more than 15 kinds of weapons, some alien, some human. As he's slowly changing form, Cross possesses new physical abilities, which will come in handy as he faces butt-ugly creatures that want to do him harm.

You know the aliens will be freaky if Stan Winston, creature designer for the films *Aliens*, *Predator*, and *Jurassic Park*, lent his talents to the drawing board. Add the original score from former Nine Inch Nails member Chris Vrenna, and this game should be a worthy sci-fi contender. ⚡

# Jade Empire

## Finally, a martial arts RPG

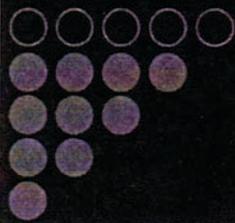
Publisher  
Microsoft Game Studios

Developer  
BioWare

Genre  
RPG

Release Date  
2004

Buzz Meter



Xbox

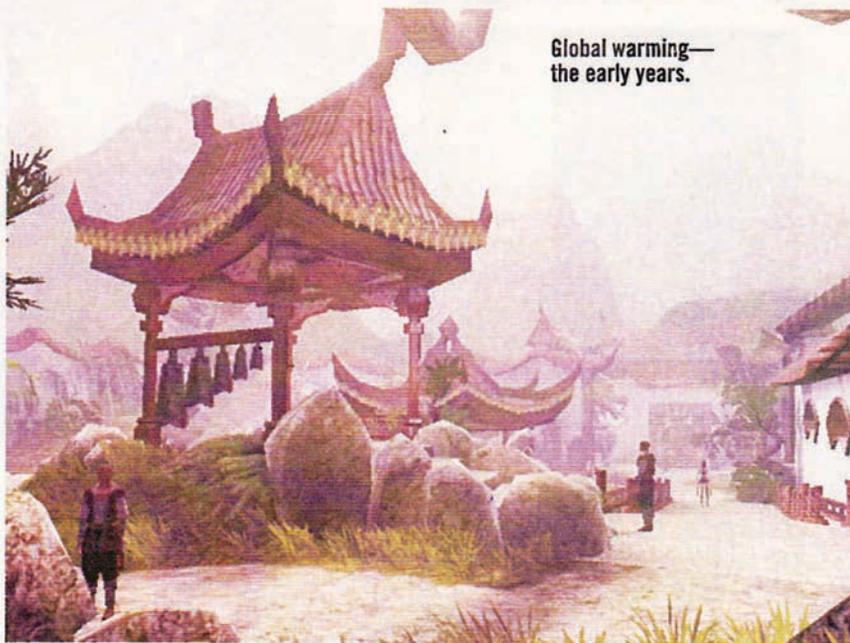
If BioWare's *Knights of the Old Republic* can be used as a benchmark, the Xbox exclusive *Jade Empire* should be equally grand, if not better.

Set in the folklore of Ancient China, you play as a fully customizable arts student training under a master, like *Karate Kid*, but without the stomach-churning earnestness. As you train in the safe confines of the monastery, evil is getting stronger outside and spirits are attacking villages. During meditation, you see images of a village being destroyed by the hideously masked Death's Hand, who also murders your father. As you set off to uncover what's happening and avenge your father's death, you develop your fighting style during monster battles to become a master yourself. Travels will take you from the monastery to mythic locales, like the Land of the Howling Spirits and the Imperial Palace.

*Jade Empire's* gameplay bears a strong resemblance to *KOTOR*. You determine your character's look, voice, and skills, with an emphasis on magic, strength, speed, or a combination of the three. As the game progresses, you pick up new skills and weapons. You must choose between good and evil, just as you would with your Jedi. Playable characters will include the lightning-quick Furious Ming and the magic-wielding Wu the Lotus Blossom.

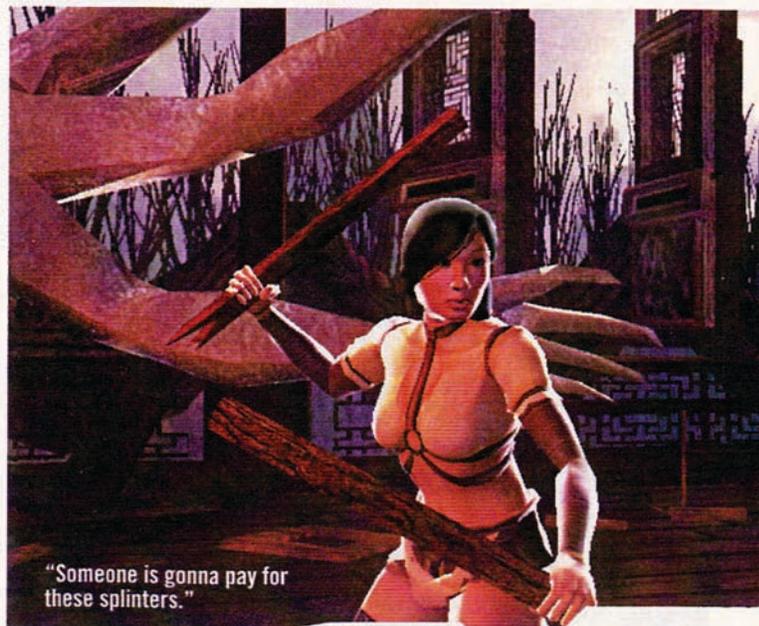
The game features agents who are non-playable characters that rally on your side, but others are enemies who join you for their own nefarious purposes. You can send your agents on missions, and some agents are better skilled than others on certain assignments. Henpecked Ho will help feed you and make

Global warming—the early years.



important contacts, while Chai Ka, the Heavenly Gate Guardian, will use his primal strength in battle.

*Jade Empire* will feature new graphics and sound engines, more render paths, and better character animation than *KOTOR*. But the story is even more fantastical, and if BioWare delivers a game as open-ended as *KOTOR*, it will have another hit on its hands. ☺



"Someone is gonna pay for these splinters."

# Gran Turismo 4

## Gearheads rejoice

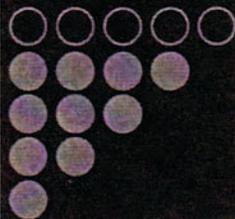
Publisher  
Sony

Developer  
Polyphony Digital

Genre  
Racing

Release Date  
2004

Buzz Meter



PS2

The realism and courses jam packed into *Gran Turismo 4* are impressive, but it's all about the cars—all 500 - plus of them. If you've dreamed of driving a concept car at the auto show, or wondered what it feels like to take a ride in wheels you can't afford, *Gran Turismo 4* is the closest you'll get without visiting the showroom.

No driving Ms. Daisy here, please—*GT4* is all about speed. The designers have painstakingly mapped every part of the vehicles down to the actual weights and speeds, and it shows in the immaculate graphics and driving physics. If you prefer the cockpit, the game can be played in first person view.

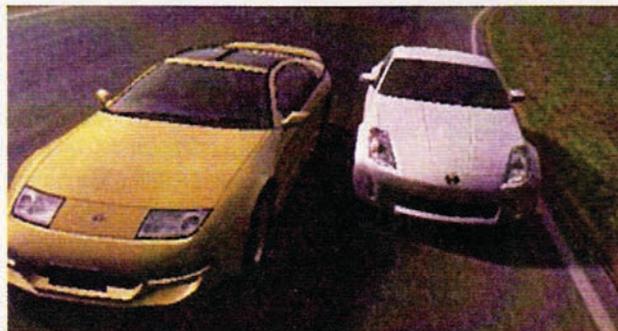
The selection of cars will include not only vintage and current models, but Formula One-type vehicles as well. Confirmed cars include the Nissan Z, Pontiac GTO, and the Mitsubishi Lancer Evo. With new tech and photo-quality backgrounds, the cars blend in seemingly with their surroundings. Courses will include New York City and the Grand Canyon. Suffice to say, "stunning" is an appropriate word, especially when



vehicles are moving in real time.

*GT4* will feature online play, where you can race against and chat with six others from around the world.

Offline, *GT4* features an arcade mode where you drive against your buddies or the computer, and a hardcore simulation mode where you work your way up from the Corolla to the Corvette, purchasing all the shocks and brake pads in between. Even if you don't understand what souped-up Civics and pit stops are all about, *GT4* will have you hooked in under 60 seconds. *S*



"Uh, yeah, hello, OnStar..."



# Halo 2

## Hail to the Chief

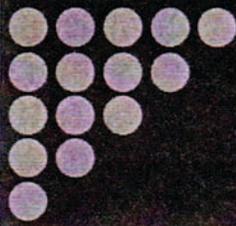
**Publisher**  
Microsoft  
Game Studios

**Developer**  
Bungie Studios

**Genre**  
Action FPS

**Release Date**  
Spring 2004

**Buzz Meter**



Xbox

What else can we say about *Halo 2* but that it's the must-have title of spring 2004? While Bungie is keeping mum about the plot, we know from the teaser trailer and E3 demo that Covenant forces have reached Earth and are unleashing their might to annihilate the human race. Another ring is part of the story—more Flood and a bit more on the Forerunner, possibly. If you haven't followed the play-by-play of *Halo 2*'s progress on the Web (shame on you), here's the scoop so far:

Master Chief, the surviving genetically enhanced soldier who defeated an entire Covenant fleet in the first *Halo*, returns to our planet to kick ass with home-field advantage. In the trailer footage, Covenant ships orbit Earth and human defenses are at full capacity and taking a beating. We see multitudes of explosions of nuclear proportions on Earth's surface.

Once again, Master Chief is at it alone (with the exception of Cortana on the comm link), and dives from his ship right into the action. With the moon and a stunning Earth in view, and as Master Chief free-falls onto a Covenant ship, the graphics are even more beautiful than the first, if not downright chilling.

The gameplay from the E3 demo showcases an astounding amount of heart-stopping action. A drop ship takes Chief to New Mombasa, a city being heavily bombarded, and Marines are squashed left and right. Chief has a few new tricks

up his sleeve: He can now hold one weapon in each hand, and jump onto and take over moving Covenant vehicles. As if the enemy A.I. wasn't already smart enough, Bungie promises they'll make survival a real bitch this time around.

In addition to the superb graphics and a lighting engine that creates a very realistic environment, there will be new weapons and vehicles, including



You talkin' to  
No? My

variations of the Warthog and the Covenant's Shadow. Most of the environment, including windows and doors, looks to be destructible. For good measure, a battle will take place on the moon.

In terms of the story, *Halo 2* will introduce the Covenant's political and religious leaders, the Prophets, and the battle-hungry Brutes. You'll also learn more about the relationship between the various Covenant races and their distaste for mankind.

The most noteworthy addition is support for Xbox Live. In addition to the multiplayer games from the first game, there will be new ones, including humans vs. Covenant battles. If all this is enough to make you salivate, we'll see you in line out in front of GameStop when *Halo 2* hits shelves. ☺

Two words:  
breath strips.



## GAMES

### Before the Workout

#### JADE EMPIRE (Xbox)

From the makers of the addictive *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic* comes a role-playing action game set in a colorful, mythical China. Players use martial arts and magic against a motley crew of humans and demons. Replay value guaranteed. ★★★★★ (out of a possible five)



#### GEIST (GC)

Having had your spirit removed from your body, you wander around an evil corporation as a ghost in this first-person shooter. Think Ken Lay visiting the afterworld. Your mission: to reunite your soul with your corpse—a task that involves possessing armed guards and animals. ★★★



#### GOD OF WAR (PS2)

If you can ignore the cheeseball dialogue and the embellished twisting of Greek mythology into some bad Vin Diesel movie, *God of War* is a visually striking game. Featuring enemies like Hydra and Medusa, this action title is full of hack-and-slash combat. ★★★★★



## CDs

### During the Workout

#### GORILLAZ Demon Days

Some CDs sound like soundtracks to movies that don't yet exist. The latest disc from Gorillaz sounds more like the soundtrack to an unmade video game. The schizophrenic collective—



led again by Blur frontman Damon Albarn—has created the summer's first great party record for the PlayStation Portable generation. With guest turns from the likes of DJ Danger Mouse, De La Soul, Ike Turner, Shaun Ryder, and Dennis Hopper, this CD is like a romp in an electronic fun house. ★★★★★

#### OASIS Don't Believe the Truth

Three years after their previous effort landed with a thud, one-time British pop gods Noel and Liam Gallagher and the gang are back. And the results are much better this time around. Sounding less like “the new Beatles” and more like the old Beatles, *Don't Believe the Truth* is far more melodic than earlier Oasis efforts. The band also channels rock-era Bob Dylan to good effect on the CD's second song, “Mucky Fingers.” But by the last track, where the Gallagher brothers repeatedly croon the chorus to “Let There Be Love,” there is little doubt about the musical heritage Oasis is mining. To its credit, the band does a pretty decent Lennon-McCartney impersonation. ★★★

## DVDs

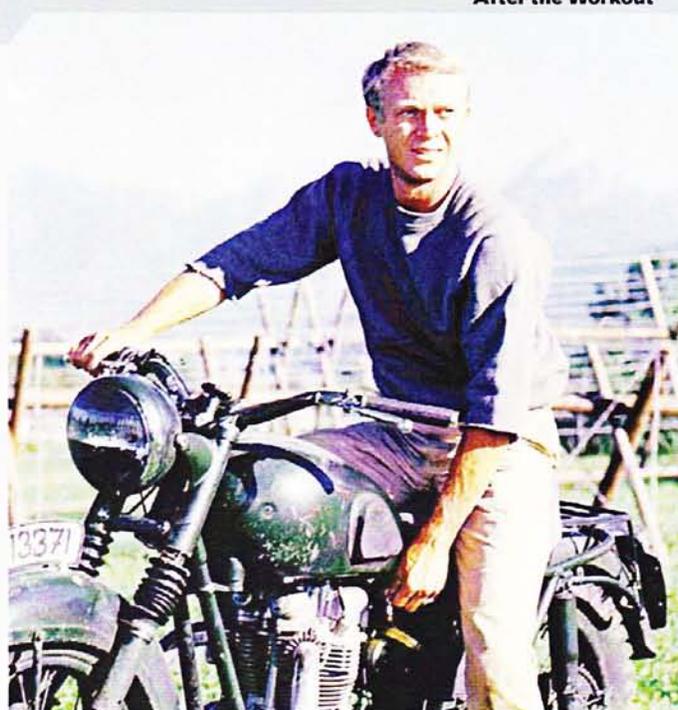
### After the Workout

#### STEVE McQUEEN COLLECTION ▶

His character's nickname may have been “The Cooler King” in the epic WWII flick *The Great Escape*, but in real life McQueen was the “King of Cool.” It's not hard to see why in this four-disc collection. Classic Westerns *The Magnificent Seven* and *Junior Bonner* join the original heist-minded *Thomas Crown Affair* to make the most impressive case yet for McQueen as one of Hollywood's biggest and most interesting stars. ★★★★★

#### THE LIFE AQUATIC WITH STEVE ZISSOU

Like all of director Wes Anderson's screwy comedies, *Aquatic*—which tells the *Moby Dick*-inspired tale of Bill Murray seeking revenge on a shark that snacked on his good friend—improves when viewed at home. Full of subtle details, Anderson's films are built for DVD, where you can slow down or pause a scene to appreciate fully its many nuances. ★★★





**APPROVED ELECTRONIC DEVICES** New research gives you an excuse to play video games.

## SIMULATOR

**Microsoft Flight Simulator X, Deluxe Edition**

Your PC has come a long way in 25 years, and so has *Flight Simulator*, which was launched back in the days when Tandy was the cutting edge in computing. Graphics are now hard to distinguish from the real thing, and the game lets players pilot 24 different aircraft, from helicopters to jumbo jets. With online play, you can connect to other wannabe flyers and play the role of an air-traffic controller or land yourself at any of 24,000 airports, including Saba in the Caribbean, the world's shortest commercial runway at 1,312 feet long. [microsoft.com](http://microsoft.com)

# Mind Games

Your home computer can improve both your vision and your hand-eye coordination. Really

Whatever you do, don't let your kids read this story. New research suggests that video games may not be the mind-numbing destroyers of gray matter you thought they were. Scientists at New York City's Beth Israel Medical Center found that doctors who played video games for more than three hours a week had improved hand-eye coordination and made 37 percent fewer mistakes during laparoscopic surgery than nongamers did. (Of course, laparoscopic surgery is basically a video game with really high stakes.) And researchers at the University of Rochester have found that

experienced action-game players have higher visual resolution, allowing them to see more details in cluttered scenes. We're not suggesting you blow off the racquetball tourney to jack cars in *Grand Theft Auto*, but if you are an adult gamer—and according to the 2007 Yankelovich Monitor State of the Consumer Report, nearly one-quarter of all gamers are over age 40—you can justify blasting away at cyborgs once in a while. More good news: You don't need a video-game console to join the fun. The five games here are designed to run on your home computer. LES SHU

## STRATEGY

**Civilization Chronicles**

For megalomaniacs or fans of the *Risk* board game, *Chronicles* bundles the entire *Civilization* franchise of world-building games into a collection of nine titles, including the latest—and critically praised—*Civilization IV*. Narrated by Leonard Nimoy, these games let you create nations from humanity's humble beginnings, build empires by taking over neighboring lands, and invent new technologies. [civilization.com](http://civilization.com)



## SPORT

**Tiger Woods PGA Tour '07**

Play against 21 professional golfers, including Vijay Singh, John Daly, and, of course, Mr. Woods. This game replicates the difficulty of playing PGA courses like the K Club in Ireland (host of last year's Ryder Cup) and forces you to adjust for wind, rain-slicked greens, and other weather conditions. It also incorporates real-time info from ESPN, so you won't miss any sports news while duffing on the virtual green. New for 2007 is team play that lets you assemble a squadron of others online to take on the mighty Tiger. [ea.com](http://ea.com)

## SHOOTER

**Battlefield 2142**

The sequel to the hit *Battlefield* war franchise takes players to a future where the next ice age has pit two continental superpowers—the European Union and the Pan Asian Coalition—in a battle for food and survival. While the sci-fi plot deviates from the modern warfare re-creation of the previous games, many of the popular elements are still there: loads of weaponry, new vehicles, and an online multiplayer function that allows up to 64 players to duke it out. The new Titan mode takes the battle onto two flying warships. [ea.com](http://ea.com)

## POKER

**World Series of Poker: Tournament of Champions**

Besides playing poker itself, you can also go into the game's Career mode, a story element that puts you on the road to becoming a professional poker player, where you'll battle top players like actress Jennifer Tilly and poker champion Chris Ferguson. Thanks to ever-improving artificial intelligence, the software can figure out how to exploit your weaknesses. So while you won't win or lose any money, the game can help sharpen your skills for that next trip to Vegas—or to [PokerRoom.com](http://PokerRoom.com). [activationvalue.com](http://activationvalue.com)



## Tech Support GAMING ON THE GO

Now that your cell phone has more memory than the computer you used in college, it's becoming a popular gaming machine. Services like Glu Mobile ([glu.com](http://glu.com)) and Gameloft ([gameloft.com](http://gameloft.com)) offer downloadable titles for a nominal fee. Two worth adding to your phone are Glu's *Brain Genius* and Gameloft's *Brain Challenge*. These noggin-training games require you to play through a series of puzzles and tests that involve math, memory, and visual stimulation. If your phone has a camera, *Genius* can even use it to take snapshots and turn them into brainteasers.