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WELCOME

We're a very cheerful and upbeat bunch here at *Stuff*, but as such, we've stopped reading anything except tech news. Because the other sorts of news suggest the end of the world is nigh. And we haven't even had a chance to welcome our robot overlords yet. Moreover, we're not wearing sensible shoes. And we have absolutely no idea where our towels are.

Assuming the naysayers are wrong and we still have civil society as we know it (and electricity) in the weeks to come, you're going to need a laptop to document and share your surprise and relief, and ours. And why settle for any old hunk of keyboard and LCD? After all, you've just survived the apocalypse! Our laptop supertest (p61) pits the best against the best to find the, well, best of the test. You're welcome. Really, any time.

Also, whichever way things turn out, it couldn't hurt to be fit. Which is why we've collected the best kit to help you whip yourself into shape in a hurry (p39). If we're headed for oblivion we may as well look good, right? And if not, well, we all remember *Zombieland* — the fit ones *always* last longer. I'm sorry, that's just the way it is.

Just in case things go pear-shaped, we've learned to ride the Ninebot MiniPro you see on this very page. Enter our competition to win one (p15) and you too could be a two-wheeled survivalist. We'll see who's pointing and laughing then, won't we? Here's hoping the supply of alternating current and smart, researcher types are around long enough for personal hovering street lamps (p112) to join the futuristic mobility party. Fingers crossed, eh? **S**

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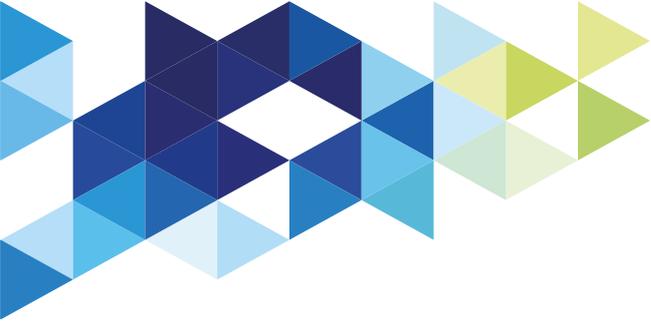


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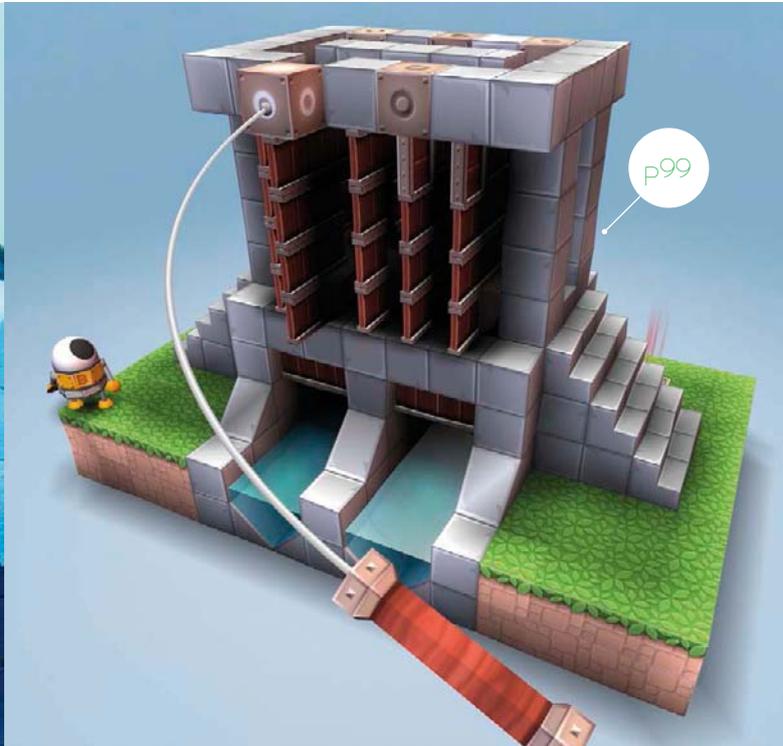
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WIN!
p15



A
NINEBOT
miniPRO

worth
R10 000



SILENCE IS GOLDEN, NC IS CLOSE ENOUGH

After years of travelling locally and internationally I've gotten into the habit of putting on my noise-cancelling headphones as soon as I walk into an airport. I've been using the Sennheiser MM 550 headphones for years and just upgraded to the new PXC 550 range. They're sublimely superb. Airports and airplanes are made infinitely more tolerable by getting rid of the white noise that's so abundant in them. Add the PXC 550's clever touch-sensitive controls on the right speaker, astoundingly comfortable ear cups, exquisite sound-quality and 30-hour battery life to the mix, and they're practically perfect. They're so good it's tempting to find other excuses to use them, like visits to construction sites. But that's just silly.

Toby Shapshak, Publisher and Editor-in-chief



TWO WHEELS ARE AS DORKY AS ONE

Last year I risked my kneecaps, elbows and ability to hold my head high at my local supermarket learning to ride Ninebot's One E+ electric monowheel in a nearby parking lot. This month to do it all again with the new Ninebot MiniPro by Segway, except the risks were minimal. It turns out riding the MiniPro is about as intuitive as walking, albeit less energetic. A gyroscope keeps it upright, leaning moves it fore or aft, nudging the centre bar with your knees turns it left or right and... that's about it. It's hard not to feel like Gob from *Arrested Development* when riding it, without the magic tricks and womanising, of course. Fun as it is, it's wholly impossible not to feel like a giant dork, though.

Craig Wilson, Editor



OUR MONTH

What this issue has brought us by way of geekery



I FOUND A LITTLE BIT OF MY FIT

I've been interested in wearables and fitness trackers since they first started showing up in sports stores and on my colleagues' wrists, and while I liked the look of the Apple Watch, I don't use an iPhone these days. Then the Fitbit Charge 2 came out and grabbed my attention like a bodybuilder grabs a protein shake. I'm no bodybuilder, but I would like to be a little fitter, and the Charge 2 — with its stark and regular reminders of just how useless I've been — is a great motivator. Guilt does a surprisingly good job of making me find excuses to take extra steps. As does competing with my Fitbit-wearing friends and loved ones in the weekday or weekend challenges. Now if only it could make me look less silly when I run.

Michelle Flowers, Account Manager



I STEPPED CLOSER TO TRANSHUMANISM

I know how it looks. I'm walking around with what looks like an old-school Bluetooth earpiece poking out of the side of my face. No, I'm not a holdover from the '90s, or some sort of time traveller who missed a fashion memo, I'm just really (surprisingly) keen on Sony's Xperia Ear in-ear assistant. It's early days yet, but it reads out messages, emails, and tweets, will answer calls and return them, send dictated messages, and update me on traffic (while plotting courses while I'm driving or walking), all using voice controls. The only way that this tech could get much better is if I could get it implanted directly into my skull... so it wouldn't look like I'm wearing a Bluetooth earpiece. Maybe in version two.

Brett Venter, Digital Editor



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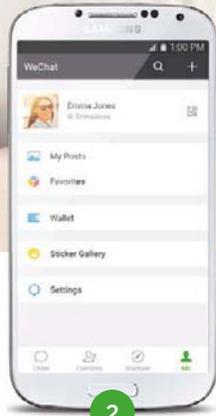
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HOW TO REGISTER YOUR WECHAT WALLET



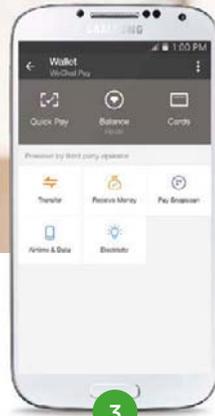
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Download WeChat and set up your profile.



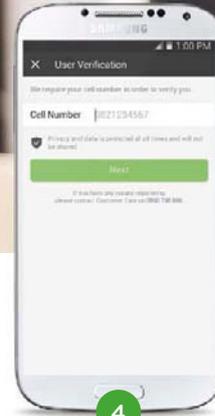
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Tap on "Me" in the bottom right corner and tap on Wallet.



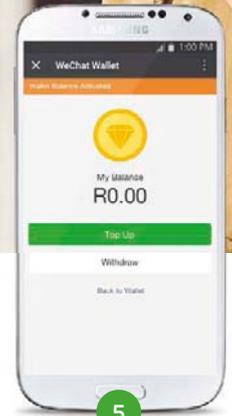
3

Land on your WeChat Wallet home screen and tap on Balance.



4

Enter your Cell Number, your OTP and then create a 4 digit WeChat Wallet PIN.



5

You are registered and can Top Up your WeChat Wallet.

HOW TO ADD A CARD TO YOUR WECHAT WALLET



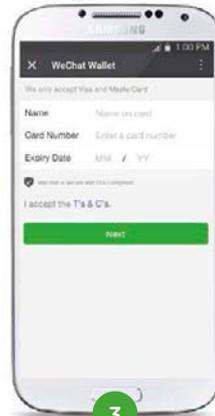
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Open your WeChat Wallet and tap on Cards.



2

Tap on Add a Card.



3

Enter your Name, Card number and Expiry Date.



4

Enter 3 digit CVV number.



5

Card Successfully added.



Buying Something?

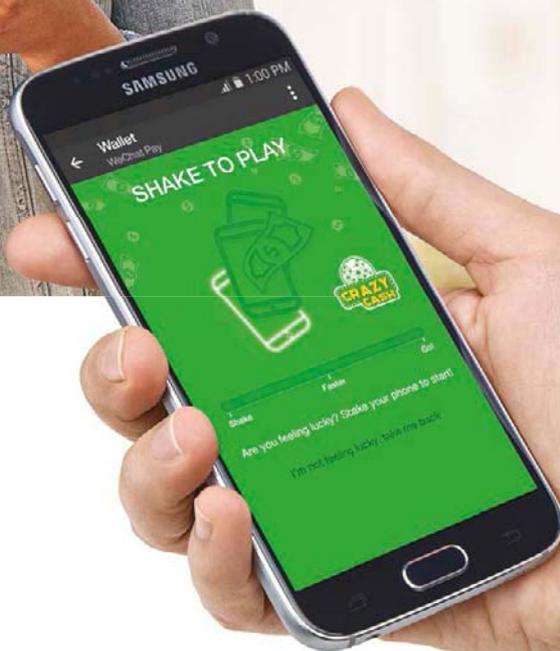
You can pay using your WeChat Wallet Balance or any chip and pin enabled credit or debit card.



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To see the full T’c and C’s go here: <https://wechat.co.za/wallet/wechat-wallet-promotions/double-or-nothing/>

WeChat Wallet help line: 086 074 8886

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HOT
FOUR
#1

FOR BUDDING ROBOT OVERLORD DESIGNERS LEGO BOOST

Sure, stepping on a stray Lego block barefoot in the dark is a fate worse than mandatory attendance of a Vogon slam poetry festival, but otherwise the Danish colourful blocks tend to prompt smiles wherever they're found. How do you make those smiles even wider? By adding programmable bits, of course. Lego Boost includes a Move Hub with built-in tilt sensors, a combined colour and distance sensor, and a couple of motors. There's also the requisite bricks and plans for a robot, cat, guitar and more. Add the Lego Boost app to the mix and, with a few taps, you'll be controlling your Lego robot/cat/replica of your favourite politician like a master, er, puppet master. Bringing your world domination that little bit closer. We're going to have to wait until later this year to get our hands on it, but that means we've got more time to plan our killing machi... um, creations.

As hot as... a Lego-guitar solo
Rtba (due August) / lego.com/boost



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F

21 PAGES
OF THE BIGGEST
STORIES FROM
PLANET TECH



**Boost for
your bucks**

While local pricing and availability hasn't been confirmed yet, with a recommended price of \$160, we're hoping Lego Boost will come in at under R2500.



**Drag,
drop, rule?**

Aimed at would-be warlords aged seven and up, the Lego Boost app includes an intuitive drag-and-drop programming interface even adults should be able to manage.





HOT
FOUR
#2

OOH, IT'S REALLY NICE IN EAR

**Bang & Olufsen
BeoPlay H9**

The world is absolutely chock full of beautiful places to be. Standing in the startling briskness of an Alpine glacier in the summer time, drifting through the humidity of a foggy Louisiana swamp. But, due to the basic uneditable algorithm of modern life, the place you mostly get to be is where you are, or thereabouts. Which, as beautiful as it may have started out, is dulled by familiarity, de-lustred by your abrasive eyebeams. The solution, for which you are surely hoping this far down the paragraph, is to forget costly location hops and disappear up your own ears. So, what you need is to pay for perfect soundscapes, in this case, delivered by B&O's latest lovely ear-places, the H9s.

They're wireless, with active noise-cancelling, and made out of the solidified joy of an engineer — your only barrier to never-ending bliss now is time itself. There are 30 million tracks on Spotify and 200,000 audiobooks on Audible, and your body is degrading even as you read this...

As hot as... taking your ears on a Caribbean beach holiday in your mind
[Rtba / beoplay.com](http://Rtba/beoplay.com)

Your life as a four-act play

B&O reckons most of your life can be covered by the four sound profiles built into its Android and iOS app: Commute, Workout, Podcast and Clear.

Finger nous

A touch-panel on the side of one ear-cup controls volume, songs and calls. We're not going to tell you which, because you have to walk some of this journey alone.



HOT
FOUR
#3

**CLOUD NINE
COFFEE MAKING**

**Superverloce
Aviatore Veloce**

It's getting too easy to overdo coffee – so people begin finding slower, more complex ways to prepare their caffeine fix. Built in the form of a jet engine using aviation-grade metals, this is the kitchen centrepiece of someone so far down the coffee-scented rabbit-hole that they almost never get round to drinking any. But when they do, silently filling the grounds filter and titanium water tank, it's with an almost religious fervour.

As hot as... it should be, and no hotter otherwise you'll scald it

R250 000 / superveloce.co

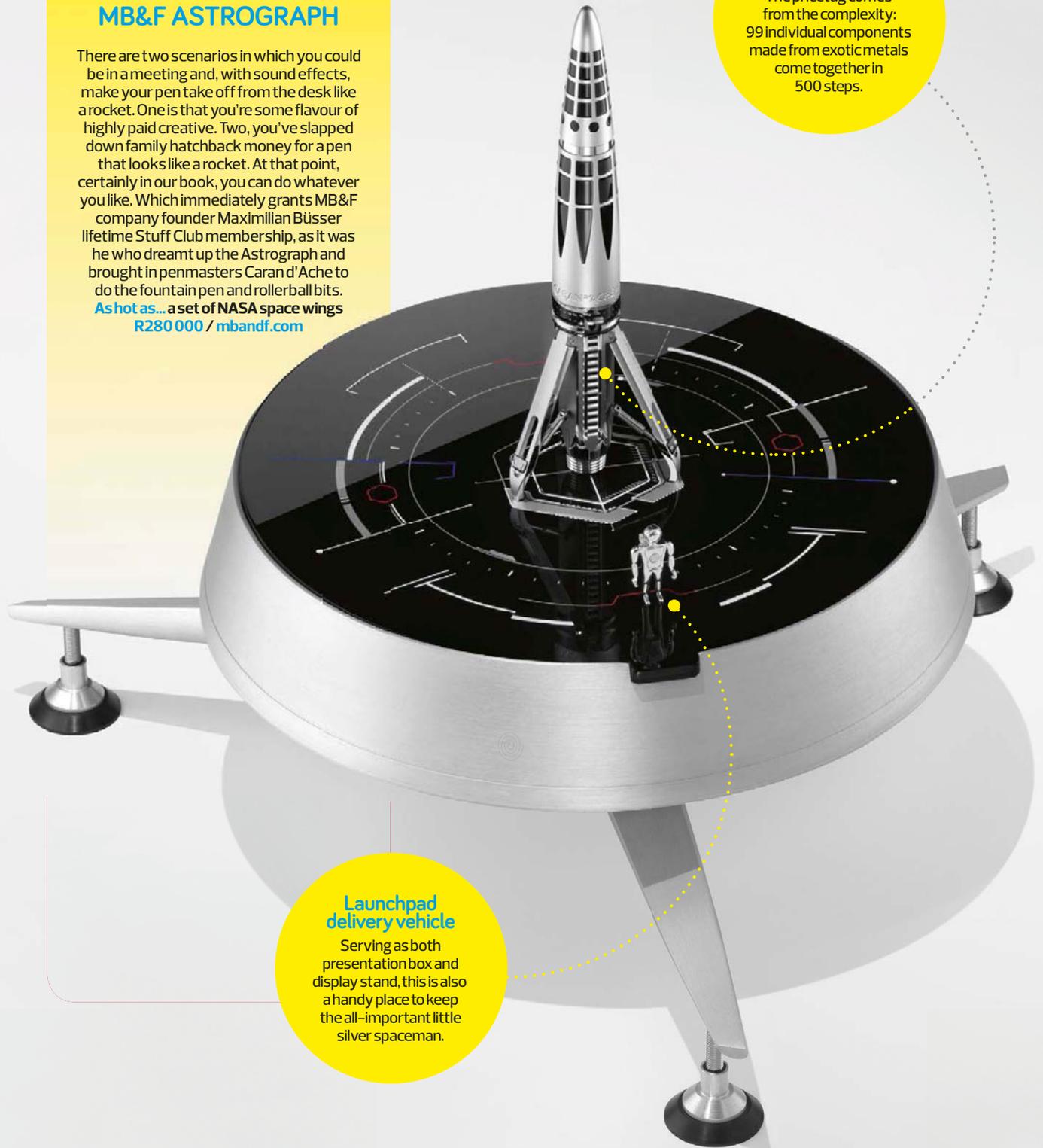
HOT
FOUR
#4IN SPACE,
NO ONE CAN
HEAR YOU SCRIBE
MB&F ASTROGRAPH

There are two scenarios in which you could be in a meeting and, with sound effects, make your pen take off from the desk like a rocket. One is that you're some flavour of highly paid creative. Two, you've slapped down family hatchback money for a pen that looks like a rocket. At that point, certainly in our book, you can do whatever you like. Which immediately grants MB&F company founder Maximilian Büsser lifetime Stuff Club membership, as it was he who dreamt up the Astrograph and brought in penmasters Caran d'Ache to do the fountain pen and rollerball bits.

As hot as... a set of NASA space wings
[R280 000 / mbandf.com](http://R280000/mbandf.com)

That's
astronomical!

The pricetag comes from the complexity: 99 individual components made from exotic metals come together in 500 steps.

Launchpad
delivery vehicle

Serving as both presentation box and display stand, this is also a handy place to keep the all-important little silver spaceman.



ninebot™

WIN

A NINEBOT miniPRO WORTH R10 000

The Ninebot miniPRO by Segway combines decades of experience with cutting-edge technology to deliver the ultimate hands-free, self-balancing scooter. With its enhanced safety features and high-performance system, the miniPRO is a durable powerhouse suited for casual riders and adventure-seekers alike.

You don't need hours of practice to master the miniPRO. The ergonomic design utilises precision sensors to capture your body's movements and maintain your balance. The knee control bar allows you to steer more easily and more precisely than two-wheeled hoverboards, which makes getting in a miniPRO less intimidating and a whole lot more fun.

The Ninebot miniPro comes standard with a 18650-lithium battery that is both lightweight and sustainable for up to 30km reaching a top speed of 18km/h. This personal transporter is suitable for anyone aged from 16-60, but if you weigh over 100kg, you'll have to sit this one out.

HOW TO ENTER
SMS "Ninebot" to 35975

(SMSs costs R1.50) Free minutes do not apply. Errors billed.

Readers must include their name and surname, contact number, email address and physical address. Valid from 13 February to 26 March 2017. Terms and conditions on the editor's letter page (p2).

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HURRY!
COMPETITION
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A SELFIE CAM TO BE PROUD OF

Fujifilm X-A10

Rtba / fujifilm.co.za



When you flip the screen the X-A10 will automatically activate the eye-detection mode.

Like it or not, selfies are here to stay. So unless you want to be confirmed as the out-of-touch oldie you always swore you'd never be, you'd better get onboard...

● **Super selfies**

You know what the best way to stick it to the kids would be? Taking selfies that are so special they'll be left flabbergasted by your artistic and technical genius. Yeah, that'll show 'em. The Fujifilm X-A10 is in many ways just a very nice, very compact Fuji compact system camera. And we

know all about them – the X-T2 won our System Cam of the Year award this year, and the X-T10 took the same title in 2015.

● **Smashing snapper**

The X-A10 slots in at the bottom of Fuji's range – it'll cost +/- R10k with a 16–50mm kit lens – but don't call it an also-ran. It has a 16.3MP APS-C sensor, a native ISO range of 200–6400 and 49-zone autofocus. It also features six of Fuji's luscious film simulation modes, including the does-what-it-says-on-the-tin Vivid and our spooky favourite, Classic Chrome. Plus there's full HD video recording, Wi-Fi for smartphone-connected remote

shots and image downloads, and the really handy electronic shutter – which lets it shoot at speeds of up to 1/32,000s. And of course, being a Fuji cam, it looks the business – sharply retro without being too try-hard, and enviably small and light.

● **Swivelly screen**

Lots of cameras have a swivelly flip-screen, but most can't then slide out further so the camera body doesn't get in the way of your view. The grip is designed to be held from either side, and there's a special command dial round the front which can be used to take the pictures in selfie mode. The X-A10

THE ELECTRONIC SHUTTER LETS IT SHOOT AT SPEEDS OF UP TO 1/32,000s

can automatically detect eyes, smiles, couples and groups, shooting away when the criteria are met and smoothing the results with Portrait Enhancer smarts. This promises to be another nice addition to the Fuji range.



HAND-TO-HAND CAMBAT

The Fujifilm X-A10 might be easy money for cameraphiles, but some of us scrimpers would prefer to supercharge our selfie experience the old-school way. The iKlip Grip Pro is no flimsy selfie stick: it's a multi-talented AV wand. It has fold-out tripod legs, 62cm of extension and a Bluetooth remote for iPhone. You can also take off the phone holder to screw on a GoPro, small digicam or podcast microphone. [R900\(import\)/ikmultimedia.com](http://R900(import)/ikmultimedia.com)



Nothing says 'edgy' more than the Alienware 13's proudly pink trackpad.

More power than a tower?

ALIENWARE 13

Look at that pink trackpad! Bit zingy, huh? And yet, remarkably, it's sitting on top of a gaming architecture designed so that you won't be able to see it. Because you'll have a VR headset on. The Alienware 13, despite being a comparatively diminutive 13in-screened 2.6kg laptop, has an Nvidia GeForce GTX 1060 graphics card powerful enough to run an HTC Vive or Oculus Rift. But wait, take it off! Because if you specced your Alienware 13 up correctly – like, maximum everything – you'll have a wondrous 2K OLED screen that will easily out-gun Rift or Vive for crispness and vibrance.

Rtba/dell.com/za



You'll like what you're hearing

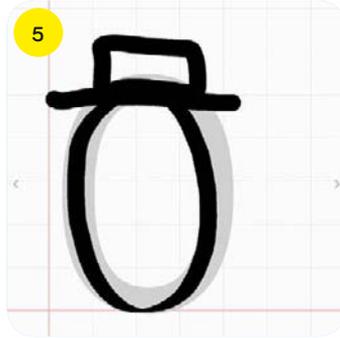
DJI PHANTOM 4 PRO

Let's clear something up: drones are not quiet. The news coverage of drones 'sneaking' contraband into prisons neatly overlooks the ear-melting 'BRAAAAAAAAAHHH' of the motors and rotors. Behind the noise, though, is brains. This new Pro version of the Phantom 4 has improved obstacle avoidance, scanning up to 30 metres all around itself and finding its way hither and yon whether directly controlled or sent to a point by poking the map on the app. It now has a 1in 20MP camera sensor, capable of up to 60fps 4K recording in the tighter H.265 format. It's also a bit more expensive, mind you, starting at close to R30 000 without any extra batteries or other additions.

fromR29900/droneworld.co.za

↓ APPS

This month's mobile must-downloads



1 Korg Kaossilator for Android

R110 / Android

Five years after iOS, Android finally gets some Korg love. Prod and slide your way to banging choonz, and hope Korg's efforts give music creation on Android a boost.

2 Runkeeper

Free (IAPs) / Apple Watch

Armed with Runkeeper, you could leave your iPhone at home and get stats from your Apple Watch. Plus, with a shiny Series 2's GPS and the latest Runkeeper update, you'll now get a map too.

3 Drivetribe

Free / iOS, Android

Can't get enough of *The Grand Tour*? Try Drivetribe – essentially Instagram for cars, with Clarkson, May and Hammond involved. Just hope Clarkson doesn't smack his followers for not giving him steak.

4 Infuse Pro 5

R140/yr / iOS, tvOS

Firecore's elegant video player grabs files from your network, then converts and squirts them to your iOS device or Apple TV. Hate subscriptions? Try the R200-for-keeps version.

5 Fonty

Free / Android

Craft your own Helvetica on an Android device... or, if *Stuff*'s efforts are anything to go by, an illegible mess. Still, if you want your own font where the letters all wear hats, now's your chance.

6 PhotoScan by Google Photos

Free / iOS, Android

The theory: dump old photos on a table, snap with your smartphone, and PhotoScan makes individual pics. The reality: some clever bits but also low-res results.

7 Tomb of the Mask

Free / iOS

This superfast and eyeball-searing game feels like it was fired out of a ZX Spectrum. Previously procedural-tastic, the game now features 60 arcade stages to test your thumb's strategic skills.

8 Microsoft Solitaire Collection

Free / iOS, Android, Windows Phone

It's tappy Solitaire, Microsoft-style. That is, clean, efficient, but broadly devoid of personality. And they don't bounce around the screen when you win. Boo.

9 The Battle of Polytopia

Free / iOS, Android

If you've been smitten with 4X turn-based strategy lawks since the early days of *Civilization*, this is palm-based bliss beyond anything 2K's mobile efforts have managed.

APP MATHS

Jetpack Joyride is mobile's most famous casual shooty one-thumb survival game... what happens when you slap it with an asteroid?

JETPACK JOYRIDE

Free / iOS, Android

Tap to shoot the floor and keep Barry Steakfries aloft, grabbing coins and avoiding enemies.



ALONE...

R30 / iOS

R28 / Android
Insanely fast split-second twitch fare, where you blast through asteroid fields and jagged canyons.



RUNGUN JUMPGUN

R50 / iOS

R45 / Android
This combines the bouncy essence of *Jetpack Joyride* with the spacey feel of *Alone...*
Your little spacechap flies by shooting the floor, belting through caverns with all manner of inconvenient spikes, sawmills, rockets and walls. Handily, he can also shoot forwards, but on doing so he rapidly starts to plummet.

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ORTEGA PERSONAL SUBMARINE

Space remains a bummer. Vacuum, radiation, terrible broadband, and the journey times are an absolute bore. But if you're determined to go off-grid, have you considered the ocean? Sure, there are equally challenging details to do with the availability of oxygen and all of your body temperature leaching out into the water. But if you do manage to establish a foothold, you'll need transport. This Ortega Mk.1C submersible can run fast on the surface and even faster underwater, although you'll need your own air supply. But remember: popping topside to post a 'gram is not really in the 'off-grid' spirit.

NEWS FEED



DEWIRED SCIENCE

A Chinese startup, helped by HTC's Vive X accelerator programme, has made a wireless adaptor for the Vive VR headset. Its first batch was immediately consumed by freedom-hungry Chinese Vivers, but there's talk of TPCast's lag-free widget hitting other shores in 2017.



FITBIT PICKS UP PEBBLE

The takeover could be a smart move for Fitbit, a wearables company that has not thus far properly smartified its fitness watches. It's slightly sad for Pebble fans, though, as the genre-breaking Core and Time 2 watch look set to be lost in the transaction.



HEY CORTANA, YOU'RE SO COOL

"Correct, I'm four degrees." Building Cortana into smart home devices such as fridges and thermostats will be possible from March, on the release of the Windows 10 Creators Update – a big rival for Google and Amazon's voice assistants.

START MENU

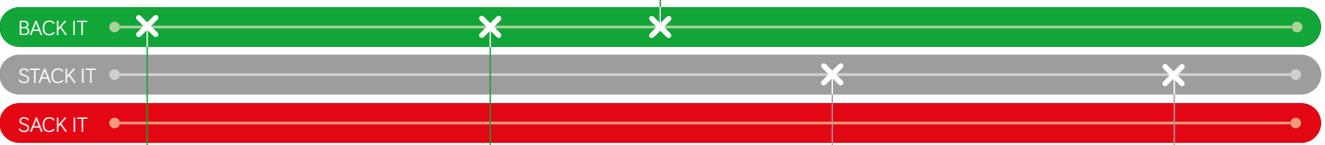
The latest startups, crowdfunded projects and plain crazy ideas

KICK-STARTER

More than it seems but less than it sees MYSIGHT360

Looking at this, no one could blame you for thinking it's just another VR camera. After all, that's what that kind of bulbous wide-angle lens is for. And, crucially, it is a VR camera. But look closer. Notice anything? No, you won't, for the MySight360's greatest trick is digital. It can crop into its broad perspective in order to level out whatever wonky angle you position the camera at. This means you can use its built-in clip to attach it to a bag strap, or the peak of your cap, and still generate a horizontal masterpiece. See, not just another VR camera.

from \$189 / event.sightour.com



KICK-STARTER



No balls-up HENG LAMP

The longer you stare at this lamp, the more twisted reality becomes. Is the top half a reflection of the bottom? Or are we all the wrong side of the looking glass, gazing in on a product neverland? No, it's just a lamp. But to turn it on, you pull the bottom ball up until it's magnetically attracted to the top one.

from €45 / allococ.com

KICK-STARTER



Hyperspark FULL WINDSOR THE MUNCHER

After a good 10 minutes of looking at this, marvelling at the ingenuity of humans, you still don't really understand how you can use it as a tin opener. Which is a shame, because your fellow campers are beginning to mutter things like "Come on, son - it's Daisies, not Antarctic Base Camp".

from \$35 / fullwindsor.co

INDIE-GOGO



Hello, hot wrists MATRIX POWERWATCH

Thirty minutes of staring at your body-heat-powered smartwatch was enough for you to start thinking you were the potato in one of those vegetable-powered digital clocks. Your friends have to take it off you to prove you can function without it.

from \$139 / matrixindustries.com

INDIE-GOGO



Game on RETROENGINE SIGMA

A glance is enough to think: 'Where have I seen that before?' You can't put your finger on it. But it does make you want to play retro games. Which is fortunate, because that's what it does: a bevy of classic games will run through its Linux-powered emulator.

from \$69 / facebook.com/retrosigma

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METERS MUSIC OV-1

R5 000 (import) / metersmusic.com

WORKING
VU METERS
ARE BUILT
INTO BOTH
HEADPHONES

Just the thing for listening to Level 42?

Only eight middle-aged people got that joke, and they didn't like it either. But no, these aren't designed for listening to '80s dad-pop. If you look closely at the sound level meters, you'll see that Meters Music is a new consumer product spin-off from acclaimed British bass amp manufacturer Ashdown Engineering. Notable noodlers on Ashdown gear include the Foo Fighters, System of a Down and Rage Against the Machine. Wow, and Lenny Kravitz! Oh, and U2.

So did any of those iconic rockers ask for VU meters on their headphones?

Nope... and neither did U2. (Ha!) But the headphones market is more crowded than the mosh pit at a Foos gig, so everyone needs something to stand out. And everyone loves an analogue meter, right? It invokes daydreams of sound studios and sci-fi movies – admit it, you're imagining a kind of electrical 'wooooo' noise even now.

I am not. (It's more like a 'squeeeee'.)

Exactly. And unlike some similar brands [*cough, Marshall, cough*], these Meters headphones have actually been designed and engineered by the same guys who make the band-pleasing amplifiers. They have active noise cancelling tech built in; that, and the meters, require occasional charging via a microUSB socket next to the cable input.

Oh, so no Bluetooth?

Not yet. Meters has plans to launch a Bluetooth version soon, along with a VU-metered Bluetooth speaker system and some in-ear headphones. For obvious reasons, the in-ears will have to miss out on the teeny twitchy needles.





Home robots are here! Well, soon...
UBTECH ALPHA 2

There's something to be said for procrastination. Having not backed Alpha 2 on its 2015 crowdfunder, instead breezily getting on with your life until Alpha 2 turned up at the mall – which is about now – you get a robot that's already been on a journey. The firmware version number will be reassuringly high, and amateur programmers across the globe will have already figured out how to leverage the cameras, the voice, touch and sonar sensors and the motors. Which means it might actually be able to do some of the home-controlling, story-telling, calendar-managing, limbo-dancing things that its Indiegogo campaign promised. Maybe leave it a little longer, just to be sure.

Rtba (due early 2017) / ubtrobot.com



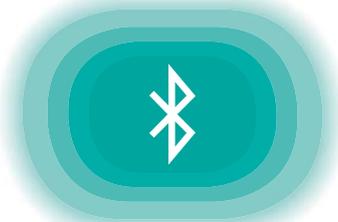
Portable stranger annoyer
POLK BOOM BIT

Why would you spend a little bit of money on a Bluetooth speaker that's going to be only marginally better than the one in your smartphone? For one very big reason: your life. Not having your lugholes plugged with earphones might be the thing that keeps you out from underneath that runaway steamroller some day. Plus, some small reasons: perhaps you like the colours, and perhaps you want your fellow runners or cyclists to hear your Simon & Garfunkel megamix?

R530 / polkaudio.com

DECIPHER

ALLOW US TO EXPLAIN...



#18 BLUETOOTH 5.0

The last time we wrote one of these pieces about wireless standards, the *Stuff* production team drew straws to see who didn't have to proofread it. But rather than nursing any hurt feelings – it was a year ago, after all – we'll assume that not everyone is as interested as we are. So, to keep it snappy:

There's a new Bluetooth!

Bluetooth doesn't really want anyone to call it anything other than just 'Bluetooth' but, just between us, it's Bluetooth 5.

You don't have it yet!

The specification has been agreed, the chip makers are making the chips and you should see things with Bluetooth 5 appearing a few months from now. They'll be backwards-compatible, but that won't get you the tasty new features...

Up to four times the range means a Bluetooth 5 device is more likely to be able to cover your entire home

It's faster!

Double the speed – but this isn't so important for the smart home applications that the Bluetooth group is particularly excited about.

It's longer!

This is more like it: up to four times the range means a Bluetooth 5 device is more likely to be able to cover your entire home. Note the 'up to' – developers will be able to tune the range to suit the application, thereby managing power consumption.

It's chattier!

A Bluetooth 5 device will have a greater capacity to identify itself. Say, not just "I'm a speaker", but "I'm an audio and video controller for a multiroom speaker system. I also control smart home settings including temperature and hot water. But my owner has forgotten most of this."

Turning the tables with... tape



Have you heard the one about the millennial and the secondhand car? It was a hand-me-down Corolla with a few dings and scratches, intended to get them to and from university. The '02 model. Very fetching grey upholstery. Belonged to an uncle. The only problem was the radio. There was this weird, rectangular slot in the front of it, and no Bluetooth button to be found. Luckily, the millennial had a copy of the new Justin Bieber album on cassette. They tried the slot, and lo and behold it worked. And so they drove happily ever after... until the cam-belt broke, that is.

I admit, that's a rubbish story. I just made it up, and it's not particularly good. The only legitimate part is the Bieber album on cassette. For some reason, the humble cassette tape is making something of a comeback. In fact, it's a little known fact that it's never really died in Africa. Plenty of local artists still put music out on cassette, because there's still a market for the small, plastic things with two plastic reels connected by a strip of magnetic tape.

We've been hearing for a while now that vinyl is officially alive again. Nielsen's year-end report for 2016 had vinyl sales at more

than 13 million in the USA, which is nothing to sneer at. In the UK, meanwhile, vinyl sales outstripped paid digital downloads for the first time. Heck, even stores like Musica now have vinyl racks of classic albums and new ones, and secondhand vinyl swaps and meet-ups are booming, if social media is to be believed.

There's a joke about vinyl that says the attraction is the cost and inconvenience. But as with all good jokes, there's a nugget of truth in it. Because vinyl is physical, it lets you show how much you like music, in the same way a bulging bookshelf is better than a Kindle for communicating to visitors how much you like reading. And album art is much better in a 30cm x 30cm package than a dinky CD booklet.

The resurgence of cassette tapes is a weird one though. They're even more finicky than records, and the artwork is even smaller. Nonetheless, last year saw a noticeable upswing in cassette sales internationally. We're not talking huge figures, but it's amazing they're selling at all.

Lots of niche, underground bands are using it as a marketing gimmick, which goes some way to explaining how the sales of blank tape cassettes in the US last year

exceeded 15 million! That's pretty significant in a world where streaming service Spotify only has 25 million paying subscribers.

Cassette tapes — if you're old enough to remember them — were a pain. They kept getting stuck in old players, and you'd have to rewind the extruded bits with a pencil. Radio DJs (like me) were forever talking over the intro or outro of songs (which I still do), ruining your efforts to record your favourite song from the local Top 30.

But it did mean that making the perfect mix tape of tracks in the perfect order (and without too many radio DJ interruptions) was an art, and when you managed to sneak a good mix tape into a girl's bag at break time, you felt good. You felt even better when she smiled at you the next morning.

Somehow I can't see those days ever coming back, but the uptick in takers for magnetic polyester tape is intriguing. I doubt the humble tape is back for a genuine resurgence, but its renewed popularity does suggest that, if you have a box with old tapes lying around, perhaps it's worth getting your hands on a proper cassette player again. All the cool kids are doing it these days... or so the cool kids tell me.



SPIN DOCTOR

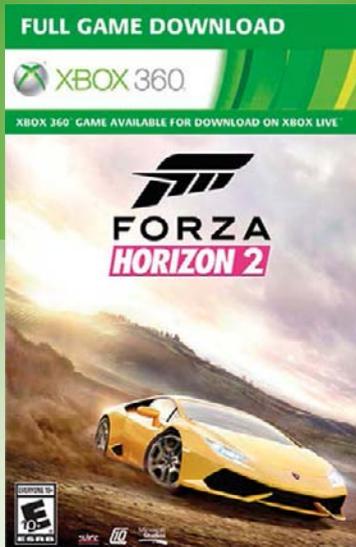
Rob Forbes is a 5FM DJ who tweets about football, sports and music when he's not presenting, camped out in a casino waiting for people to let go of a car (long story) or raiding *Stuff's* storage cupboard. Catch him on 5FM between 13:00 and 16:00 every weekday.

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FIRST LOOK THE LAST OF US PART II PS4

Some stories are better left alone. It's why there's never been a *Con Air 2: Now Boarding* or *ET Returns: Even More Terrestrial*. So when the credits rolled on *The Last Of Us*, deep down many people hoped that was the last they'd hear from Joel and Ellie, even if the ending left questions unanswered.

But after secretly teasing a follow-up back in September without anyone realising, developer Naughty Dog has shown off the first trailer for its sequel to *Stuff*'s favourite PlayStation game of all time.

The Last Of Us Part III is set five years after the first game. Ellie is now 19 years old and as she plucks out a tune on an acoustic guitar, with tattoos snaking up her bloodied arm and a dead body lying at her feet, she looks a long way from the vulnerable young girl we met at the start of the first game.

This newly militant Ellie will be the main playable character this time around, and her Liam Neeson-esque promise of revenge is very much a sign of things to come. Co-writer Neil Druckmann has says this game

is "about hate" where the first one was about love. Does that mean Joel and Ellie will turn on each other? Who is Ellie so keen on killing? Will the Fireflies militia be involved?

With the game probably not due until 2018, Naughty Dog is understandably keeping many details under wraps; but we do know it'll run on an updated version of the *Uncharted 4* engine, no doubt with some extra gloss applied for the PS4 Pro, so you can expect those dastardly Clickers to be even more terrifying than before.



FIRST LOOK INTERGALACTIC GAMING

**ASTRONEER** Xbox One, PC

If Pixar made *No Man's Sky: The Movie* it'd probably look something like *Astroneer* – a cross between *Minecraft* and *Wall-E* set during an interplanetary goldrush in the 25th century. With dollar signs in your eyes you're fired off into space in the hope of hitting the jackpot, with a galaxy full of procedurally generated planets to hop between and plunder.

Fortunately you'll have more than just a shovel and the pockets of your spacesuit at hand to help you gather

your extra-terrestrial booty. You're armed with powerful tools that let you tunnel down into the surface of each planet, forge bridges out of space rock to help you reach previously inaccessible areas, or flatten out locations in order to build bases on them, which will allow you to store resources and accumulate wealth.

While *No Man's Sky* is a largely solitary experience, *Astroneer* promotes drop-in/drop-out co-op with up to three other

explorers. You'll be able to climb behind the wheel of a buggy to traverse the ground more quickly and find somewhere to lay down the foundations for your base – or seek out any hidden artefacts that could help your quest to colonise space.

How long do you have to wait till you can blast off on your first exploratory mission? No time at all. It's out on Steam's Early Access and Xbox One's Game Preview Program right now, with a proper release to follow later in the year.

REASONS TO REVISIT NO MAN'S SKY (WITH FOUNDATION UPDATE)

**1 BUILD A BASE**

You know that planet you found that's covered in big blobs of gold? It'd be nice to stay there harvesting the lot, wouldn't it? Find an abandoned outpost and you can claim it as your own, shacking up to develop new tech while expanding it to hold your scavenged loot. You can even teleport to it from space stations.

**2 TRY THE NEW MODES**

Switch to the *Minecraft*-style Creative mode and it'll give you free rein to expand your base, while the restrictions on your intergalactic travel will be removed too, allowing you to hop around from planet to planet. Go for Survival mode, however, and the universe will do everything it can to make you an ex-astronaut.

**3 PIMP YOUR RIDE**

You might think your current vessel is big, but wait until you see the purchasable freighters from the Foundation update. Big enough to hold multiple ships, grow crops and stockpile resources, they're basically flying bases that can be summoned across the galaxy or flown to wherever trade prices are highest.



INCOMING

MARCH

- HORIZON ZERO DAWN
- GHOST RECON WILDLANDS

APRIL

- BULLETSTORM: FULL CLIP EDITION

AUTUMN

- RED DEAD REDEMPTION 2



Watch your back

Years ago my love affair with board games nearly came to very abrupt end. The reason? Playing *Diplomacy* with my cousin Robbie.

Diplomacy is a "classic" game that must be played with seven players, and usually takes as many hours. There's no rolling of dice, just secret negotiations with other players conducted in hushed tones, in adjoining rooms or via text message. After the negotiations everyone commits to an action.

For the first few hours things were civil — battle lines were drawn and everything seemed to be above board. Robbie and I had formed an alliance with another mate, and the three of us were dominating the game.

We were about five hours in with the end drawing near when we slipped away to plan our death strike. It was cunning, sneaky, and it felt bad in all the best ways. You see, Robbie and I had quietly slipped one another a note — we were double-crossing our mate. Or so I thought.

Unfortunately for me, Robbie had made the same agreement with our mate, and ended up shafting both of us and winning the game in one decisive move.

I hated him for about a week. Yet here I am, about to

recommend tabletop games to you that involve lying to your friends. With each of them, backstabbing is the order of the day. It'll be brutal. It'll be hilarious. I'll get you in trouble with your nearest and dearest. But, almost all of these games will be over in around 30 minutes, so your actions shouldn't linger in your opponents' minds for too long. Heck, they might even forgive you, eventually. But depending who you're playing with, you might end up sleeping on the couch anyway.

The first is one of my favourite dinner party games. It's good for six to a dozen players and can be explained to everyone in around 10 minutes. I've never played it only once in an evening, because people always want to give it a second go. The game is called *The Resistance*.

In it, the players form part of a resistance group trying to overthrow a corrupt government. Not all the players though, as some are hidden government spies trying to foil the plans. The job of the resistance is to figure out who the baddies are and to keep them from "missions" where they can spoil things.

The job of the spies is to make the goodies doubt their real mates. There's no regular gameplay here, just negotiation and table talk — it creates complete and utter paranoia,

and you'll be laughing out loud more than anything.

A similar game that works well with younger players is *One Night Ultimate Werewolf*. Some players are villagers, each with different skills, and others are werewolves. The trick is figuring out who's who. The game is accompanied by a free app that controls the flow of things. Players take cards, and the app does the rest.

As with *The Resistance*, bluffing is the order of the day. Each round takes about five to ten minutes to play, so we generally play four or five rounds. *ONUW* is thematically lighter than *The Resistance* and easier to pick up and play immediately. But its skulduggery is no less satisfying.

Last on my list of backstabbery is *Good Cop Bad Cop*, which requires slightly less bluffing and slightly more deduction. It's good for four to eight players, and the best thing is that it's the same size as a regular deck of cards. If you invite me over for dinner you can almost guarantee that I'll have it with me in my pocket, you know, just in case.

Playing games with your mates has to be fun, and there's nothing quite as fun as being a bit devious... and getting away with it. Trust me.



BOARD MEMBER

Once a band roadie operating lights for acts like Iron Maiden and Def Leppard, Rich Mulholland now heads up SA's largest presentation firm, Missing Link, rocks the professional speaker circuit, and guest lectures on business at The Cape Graduate School of Business (GSB) and the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS).



Track and(s)talk

ALCATEL MOVE TIME

Remember the days when children could ride their bicycles around town, carried change for payphones in their socks, and could claim to be heading to their well-behaved friend's house when they were actually scheduled to play with fireworks at the local park? Well, those days are gone kids. Sorry. See Alcatel's Move Time watch includes a SIM card and GPS, which makes it trackable. There's also a mic and speaker, for making calls to predefined numbers, or getting voice messages from mom and dad. Geo-fenced safe zones let the parents know when boundaries have been breached, and four days between charges make the flat-battery excuse... improbable. Creepy. But hey, at least you'll grow up with all of your fingers intact.

R1200 / cna.co.za



Warning: Keep away from pandas

BAMBOUA SCRIPTOR MATES KEYBOARD SET

Why have we stopped making computers out of wood? Right, because processors are hot and wood is flammable. But if you want to lift some nature-loving eyebrows then fielding a wireless keyboard and mouse set made from sustainable bamboo is just the way to do it. Bamboua's Scriptor Mates combo is a wireless, sweat (and spill) resistant keyboard with an actual bamboo mouse. Construction is solid, the keyboard is satisfyingly clacky, but the real star here is the uniqueness factor. Have this on a desk when someone's visiting and they'll quickly forget the purpose of your meeting – something that could be good or bad, depending on why they wanted to talk to you. Because look, wooden keyboard.

R1000 / bamboua.co.za



? WTF IS BIXI?

Not another gesture control widget?

OK, we'll admit it: touch-free device control is no new pursuit. Bixi, though, is different. It plays nice with a host of smart home kit, such as Philips Hue bulbs, Sonos speakers and more, pairing through your phone via Wi-Fi or Bluetooth to send instructions bouncing around the house.

Does it work like that Jean-Michel Jarre synth? The one with the lasers?

Not quite – it uses optical sensors, not lasers. Bixi takes highly precise light measurements to figure out what your hand is doing so that it can convert your mid-air motions into commands for your kit. From swipes to waves to air-taps, it'll compute a host of gestures – simply load up the relevant profile and it'll figure out whether you want to pause a song or dim the lights. And it gets better with age.

But I've got an Amazon Echo – who needs to wave when you can speak?

Actually, a lot of people. Can you take your Echo on a bike ride? Thought not. Even if you strapped a Dot to your frame, you'd have to shout pretty loud. Stick a Bixi on your handlebars, though, and you can wave to do all sorts. Pair it with a GoPro, for example, and in one smooth sweep of your palm you can start recording.

Won't the cables get in the way while I'm whizzing down the road?

It's battery-powered, obviously. In fact, it'll last a whole month on a single charge. Like a puppy, it spends a lot of time sleeping – only waking when it detects a stable paw hovering above it.

Can I take it swimming?

We're not sure why you'd want to, but no, you can't. Bixi does have some rugged credentials up its smart sleeve, though. It's splashproof – perfect for waving while washing up – and packs a Gorilla Glass frontage for ham-fisted gesturers.

Hmm, maybe I'll try one...

You can't – yet. What you can do is put your cash down for a Bixi over at Indiegogo and, all being well, you should get it in April. The project has already received more than four times its original funding goal – so things are looking good.

NEXT-GEN WHEELS

OUR PICK OF 2017'S
HOTTEST RUNNERS
AND RIDERS

ON FOUR WHEELS



Alfa Romeo Stelvio Quadrifoglio

SUVs are in the odd position of being desirable and dowdy. For the marketers at an Italian company such as Alfa, this poses a problem. The solution? Get some friends in – say, Ferrari – to cast their eyes over the twin-turbo V6 and rear-biased four-wheel-drive system... and the people from your own Quadrifoglio performance department, to put the coveted cloverleaf badge on it. Then you show your buyers this, while selling them the non-fast diesel version.



Ford Mustang GT

Making an American muscle car is incredibly easy. Huge engine at the front, then gearbox, then a driveshaft to the rear wheels. No more than two doors on the sides, brooding face on the front. Done. And that's the formula to which Ford stuck when it finally launched a right-hand drive Mustang in SA a year back. But for many of us, 2017 will be the first time we drive the glorious 5.0-litre V8 GT, or – more likely – at least start seeing more of them on our roads, once the waiting list clears.



NextEV Nio EP9

The Chinese-based but international-faced NextEV has made what amounts to a giant paella. It's not going to make many of them, but come the time when you want a normal paella, you're going to think, "I'll go to those guys who made that giant paella!" And as showcase paellas go, the EP9 is a hella paella. Formula E-derived motors for each wheel channel 1360bhp of electric power – a megawatt! – to give it a 0-100 time of 2.7secs and a new Nurburgring record for electric vehicles.



Nissan Micra

And here we are. From an Italian super-SUV to an American bruiser to a Chinese (Spanish?) electric hypercar, and now we come to the humble Nissan Micra – which has just slapped us in the face for calling it 'humble'. An Automatic Face Slapper (AFS) is just one of the smorgasbord of tech options the new, sharper Micra will have. It also gets pedestrian-detecting brakes, lane control, 360° cameras and an intriguing Bose sound system with speakers in the front-seat headrests.



ON TWO WHEELS

**KTM Duke**

The Duke is KTM's mischievous urban ferret of a bike, updated for 2017 with fancy LED strip lights, ride-by-wire throttle, suspension tweaks and a colour instrument display. Why should you care? Because it makes a 125cc version that you can, after getting your learners, legally ride. OK, there's still a decent helmet and armoured clothing to pay for, and insurance will be a bummer, but with the expected price firmly in the 'reasonable' realm, a Duke is not necessarily a pipe dream.

**BMW G310GS**

You've probably still got a DVD of Ewan McGregor and Charley Boorman's *Long Way Round* somewhere, the dreams of adventure also gathering dust in the side cabinets of your mind. You may have been put off by all the time they spent struggling with their huge 1200cc BMW bikes. Well, tie a bandana around your forehead and check this out: a new super-lightweight GS with a 300cc engine. Now all you need is an accomplice... and a route.

**Husqvarna Vitpilen 401 Aero**

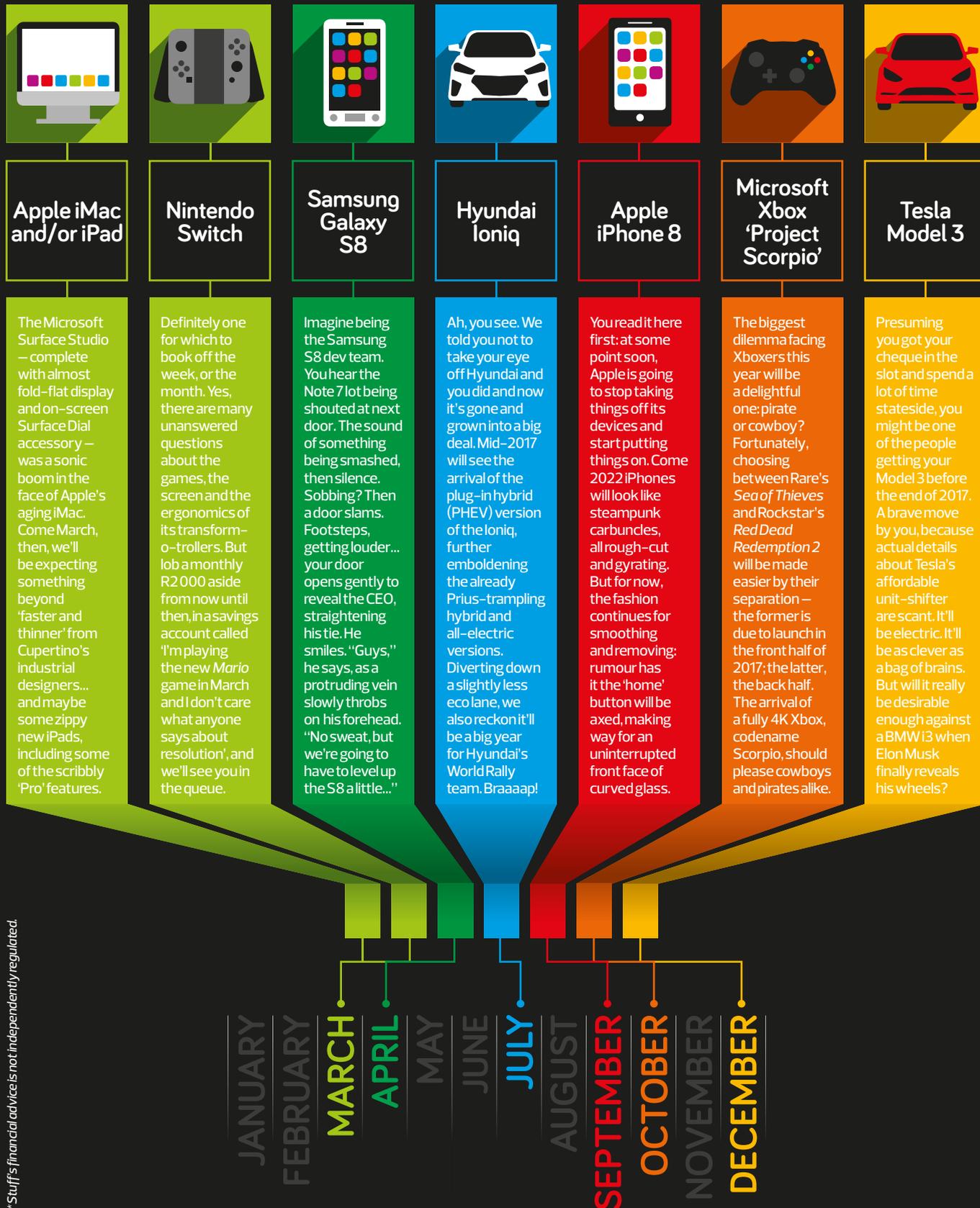
There are plenty of reasons you shouldn't be ogling bikes like this. And there are a couple of reasons we shouldn't be showing you it: Husqvarna is owned by KTM, which already has a bike on this page; and this is a non-production concept by design company Kiska, based on two bikes that won't be available for months. But if you *could* have a Vitpilen 401 (or scrambly Svartpilen 401), you'd probably spend a lot of time staring in awe – so you might as well start now.

**Honda X-ADV**

It all starts out as a bit of fun, doesn't it? You challenge your designers, just for laughs, to draw up an off-road scooter. And then you show the pictures to the press, and everyone has a good laugh at the concept and goes back to proper bikes. Except that all happened in 2015. And this is 2017, and it's in production: a 750cc rugged scooter with automatic transmission and long-travel suspension so it can cope with all your weekend trips... and because it's a Honda, it'll probably be really good.

GEEK DIARY

Look, interest rates are terrible, so stop pushing cash into that savings account and spend it all on something nice*



*Stuff's financial advice is not independently regulated.

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Huawei P8 Lite

The Huawei P8 Lite has outstanding shooting capabilities thanks to its 13MP rear camera and professional specifications. And that's not all, a phenomenal 5MP front camera means that great pictures can go both ways, like taking great-looking selfies. The Huawei P8 Lite is powered by an octa-core 64-bit Kirin 620 processor that supports HDR photography and 1080p HD video encoding and decoding.

* Limited to 75 units

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Old year's resolution

Nintendo's miniaturised version of what passed for hi-res gaming in 1986 is a proper cutey – but does it have the playability to back up its retro charm?

R1000 / takealot.com

Nintendo's Classic Mini is a little bundle of joy. If you took a first look at this tiny replica of the 30-year-old NES console and thought twice about sticking it at the top of your ideas list for that leftover festive spending money, then reconsider. This adorable device works pretty much as well as you could hope, and it comes with 30 brilliant games pre-installed.

Whether you're a wistful pre-millennial looking to revisit *Super Mario Bros.*, *Excitebike* and the like, or a youthful gamer who fancies playing those retro gems for the first time, you're in for a treat. Just bear in mind gaming has moved on quite a bit since the age of these 8-bit creations.

At less than half the size of the original NES, you can easily tuck the thing underneath your TV or stick it on top of your modern console. Unlike an Xbox One S or PS4 Pro, the Mini has a certain *je ne sais quoi* that draws admirers to it like cosplayers to a Comic Con venue.

2 Smalltown boy

The Classic looks as though someone left a NES in the wash for too long – in a good way. Time has been kind to its achingly '80s grey/grey colour scheme, while the controller's D-pad and A, B, Start and Select buttons seem adorably quaint.

3 Just can't get enough

Wondering why this review doesn't have a five-star rating? A two-metre controller cable is the reason. Unless you invest in a pair of super-sized microUSB and HDMI cables, there's no way to play this thing at a healthy distance from your screen.

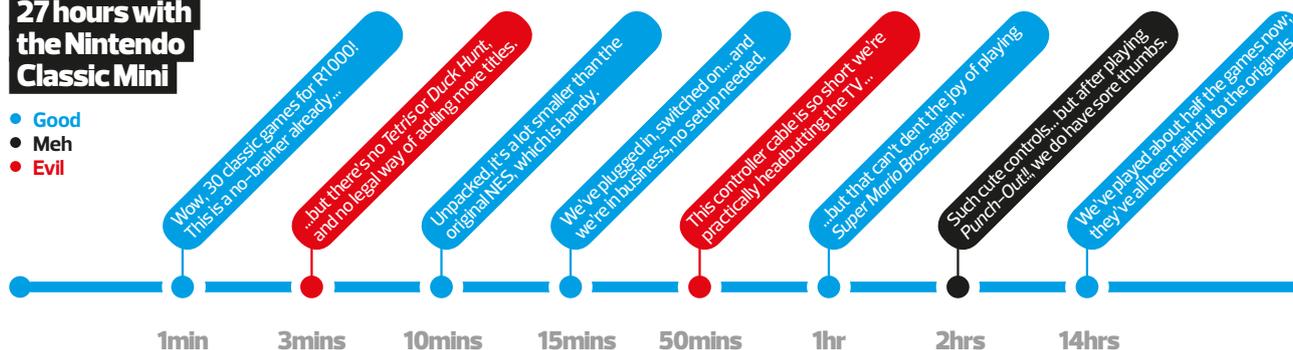


1 Together in electric dreams

Setting up is a cinch: connect the supplied HDMI lead to your TV and hook up the microUSB cable with an AC adaptor of your own. Not having one in the box is a bit of a pain, but any old plug you've picked up as part of a phone-charging kit will do.

27 hours with the Nintendo Classic Mini

- Good
- Meh
- Evil



Techspecs

Accessories included One controller (extras sold separately), HDMI cable, USB power cable (without adaptor plug)

Display options 'Pixel Perfect' 1080p, 4:3 aspect ratio, CRT filter **Refresh rate** 60Hz

Dimensions 130x100x42mm



4 The look of love

You're guaranteed hours of fun from the moment you turn this thing on. The only tweak you may want to make is whether to select 'Pixel Perfect' viewing, an old-school 4:3 aspect ratio, or the ultra-nostalgic wiggly haze of the CRT filter mode.

5 We missed again

The Classic Mini's 30 games are faithful recreations of the originals, but bear in mind a lot of them are hard. Well, all games were super-tough back in the day. If you thought *Dark Souls* was a challenge, try giving *The Legend of Zelda* a go.

8-bit hits

We've tested all 30 games that come with the Classic Mini – these are the four you should be loading up first



Metroid

Design touches that were groundbreaking at the time – a non-linear layout with power-ups that give protagonist Samus Aran access to new areas of the map – make *Metroid* a treat even today.



Mega Man 2

This is regarded in some quarters as one of the best video games ever made due to its simple, tightly focused gameplay, mixing platform-jumping with puzzle-solving, combat and assorted power-ups.



The Legend of Zelda

The game that introduced the world to questing elf-boy Link, scary Ganon and the mystical Triforce, this brilliantly involving action-adventure title was a precursor to today's action RPGs.



Super Mario Bros. 3

You're basically scooting through scrolling levels, grabbing bling and beating up enemies... but there's a richness to the controls and design that propel this game far beyond anything else on the system.

SMB3 even has the original discoloured strip along the right-hand side.

Helpfully, the Classic Mini can create save states for any game.

This is a treasure trove of brilliance, from *Mega Man 2* to *CrossEvolution*...

...not to mention lesser-known gems such as *Kid Icarus* and *Star Troopers*.

15hrs

19hrs

23hrs

27hrs

The Nintendo Classic Mini captures the imagination like no other console we've seen this past year. Big kids, actual kids and people who claim to know better will come flocking in its direction once they've seen *Donkey Kong* playing on a TV screen. It's this spirit of gleeful enthusiasm that the new NES captures so well.

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

R1 000 is a small price to pay for so much escapism – despite a few foibles, this is an essential purchase

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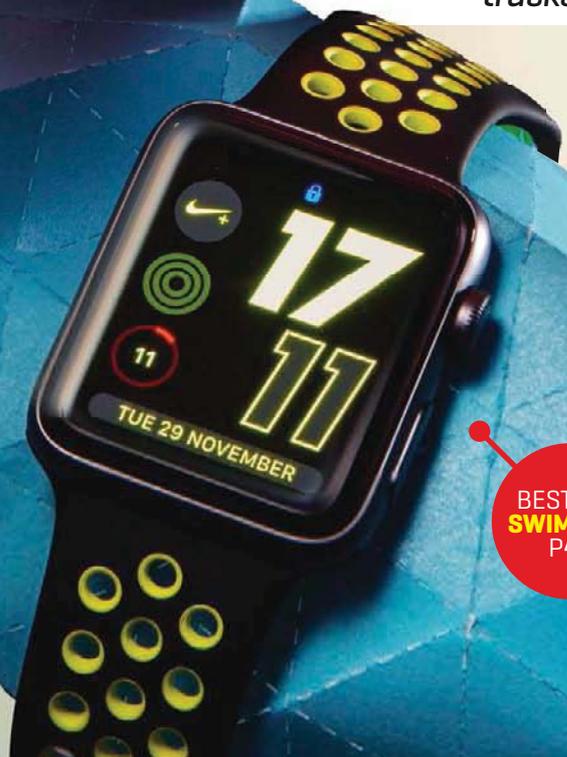
BEST FOR
CYCLING
P42



BEST FOR
RUNNING
P40

WRIST ASSESSMENTS

Whether you're on two feet, on two wheels, or just had too many mince pies last year, there's a fitness tracker out there for everyone



BEST FOR
SWIMMING
P44

RUNNING



HITTING THE WALL

If you're using GPS and the heart-rate monitor while playing music, TomTom reckons you'll get up to five hours on a full charge. In our experience it's closer to four. This is certainly no stamina champ.

▼ THE PRO CHOICE

TOMTOM SPARK 3 CARDIO + MUSIC

from R4 000 / tomtom.com/en_za

Sometimes the only way to get yourself out of bed for your morning run is to turn it into a Rocky montage. Enter TomTom's Spark 3, which is particularly suited to music-loving pavement pounders.

Getting Eye of the Tiger onto its 3GB memory is hardly the slickest procedure (although it's definitely worth it), but once the tunes are there and you've got a pair of Bluetooth headphones hooked up – it comes with some for an extra R1000 – you can start tracking your runs with the built-in GPS and heart-rate monitor. You can set specific objectives for each part of your run, such as fat burning, how many calories you want to crush, or what distance you want to cover.

It's certainly no Apple Watch in terms of design (the greyscale screen could be brighter and has just 144x168 pixels) or functionality (it doesn't do phone notifications), but that simplicity equals better battery life. There's no touchscreen, so a 4-way button underneath the screen controls all the functions, with vibration feedback to confirm selections – handy when you need to skip an accidentally loaded ballad in mid-run.

Once back home you can sync up your activities to the TomTom MySports app, which keeps track of all your workout data including duration, calories burned, heart rate and a map of where you actually ran.



JBL REFLECT MINI BT

Bluetooth earphones used to be unwieldy lumps of plastic that would weigh down anyone trying to run while wearing them. JBL's Reflect Mini BTs have all the wireless smarts in a lightweight pair of buds with a reflective cable, so even if you can't hear the passing cars or incoming joggers, they should be able to see you.

R1 400 / takealot.com



2XU MA1967B COMPRESSION TIGHTS

Some people might be put off wearing tights to go running, but consider one thing: Superman wears them all the time. And quite aside from any comic book associations, compression tights help your circulation, which helps fight fatigue and can prevent injury.

R1 250 / 2xu.co.za

STUFF SAYS Tough but tuneful, perfect for routine jogs ★★★★★

**BEEFED UP**

This Fitbit's monochrome OLED screen is four times bigger than the ridiculously simple screen found on the original Charge, which makes it a whole lot easier to read at arm's length.

CLEVER COUNTER

There's no need to pre-warn the Vivosmart when you're about to embark on a severe calorie cleanser. It automatically detects what kind of activity you're doing to ensure it records the right movements.

▼ ALL-ROUNDER

GARMIN VIVOSMART HR+**R3 900 / garmin.co.za**

The Vivosmart HR+ isn't the best-looking fitness band, even in the nifty purple colour seen here. It's packed with sensors, though – like an optical heart-rate monitor for getting you up off the couch, and GPS to track your routes. That simple screen can show off a huge amount of data, its battery is good for all-day tracking, and it sticks smartphone notifications on your wrist.

Stuff says ★★★★★

▼ TWO IN ONE

FITBIT CHARGE 2**R3 000 / fitbit.co.za**

Fitbit's Charge 2 isn't just a glorified pedometer. This 24/7 tracker has a built-in optical heart-rate monitor, making it more accurate than most, and it can also work out your VO2 Max score. You'll have to bring your phone with you if you want to use GPS to record your route, and it's not waterproof; but if you don't want to switch between a day-to-day fitness band and a dedicated running watch, the Charge 2 is worth a space on your wrist.

Stuff says ★★★★★☆

▼ THE APP

**UNDER ARMOUR SPEEDFORM GEMINI 2 RECORD EQUIPPED**

If it's your feet that are doing the running, doesn't it make sense for them to do the tracking too? These smart shoes have a Bluetooth pod sealed inside the right shoe that records distance, speed and pace, with GPS mapping data included if you take your phone.

Rtba / underarmour.com**FIRST ASCENT SUPREME RUNNING JACKET**

When you're bounding along in the dark, if you're not wearing the right kit you can be hard to spot. A jacket that reflects headlights is the answer – and First Ascent's Microtex fabric and underarm ventilation will also keep you dry and cool.

R1 000 / sportsmanswarehouse.co.za**SAUCONY STRIDE LAB**

Follow this app's evaluation exercises and it'll churn out a custom programme to make sure you're running properly. Because apparently it's not just about putting one foot in front of the other.

Free / iOS

▼ THE PRO CHOICE

SUUNTO SPARTAN SPORT

R10 000 / ultimo.co.za

The Spartan shares its name with an ancient group of Greek warriors for a reason. It's a no-nonsense sports watch built for serious athletes – even if it does come with a funky blue strap.

With real-time lap tables plus power and speed, as well as heart rate (as long as you wear the bundled chest strap – there's no on-board HRM), it's packing more information here than any Sunday cyclist could need. It'll play nicely with Suunto bike sensors and BLE power meters as well, in case you need even more precise tracking. Basically, if you're not doing time trials, this is probably overkill.

It's built to last too, with a super-tough steel bezel and mineral crystal glass

protecting the touchscreen. Don't expect Apple Watch-rivalling clarity and colour, though: it's a decidedly low-res affair with only a few muted colours.

You won't need to find a pocket to stash your smartphone, as it has GPS on board. Even for long-distance rides, it should survive the duration without running out of juice – in training mode, it'll keep ticking for 16 hours with GPS enabled.

And it will drop digital breadcrumbs as you cycle – so you can see where you've come and make it home without getting lost. Having to wear a chest strap to track your heart rate can be a pain, but for sheer flexibility and accuracy, the Spartan Sport is certainly tough enough.

STUFF SAYS Serious tracking that'll outlast your longest cycle route ★★★★★



OAKLEY RADAR PACE

Oakley's attempts to cater for your ears as well as your eyes haven't always gone well, but unlike 2004's Thump MP3 specs, these offer real-time voice-activated coaching feedback, not just tunes. As well as having sensors built in, they'll connect to power meters, heart-rate monitors and such like for more accurate monitoring. [Rtba / oakley.com](http://Rtba/oakley.com)



GARMIN EDGE 820

Garmin's latest cycling computer doesn't just record your ride on its 2.3in screen; its new GroupTrack feature means you can use it to check up on other riders using Garmin Connect – up to 50 at once. It'll hook up to speed, cadence and heart-rate sensors, so you can tell if you're more Chief Wiggum than Bradley Wiggins. [R9 000 / garmin.co.za](http://R9000/garmin.co.za)

CYCLING



ALL FAIR GAME

Bored of cycling? The Spartan Sport has presets for 80 different sports. They're more variations on a fitness theme than parkour to kabadi, but with hiking and ski touring among them, it's got you covered.

▼ ROAD COACH

MOOV NOW**R1 200 /
quantifi.co.za**

The Moov Now's not just a tracker, it's a trainer. Strap it to your ankle and it can work out how fast you're pedalling, how much effort you're putting in and, if you've paired it with a heart-rate monitor, what it's all doing to your ticker. Combined with route info, it'll use the data to feed coaching tips into your ears or to your phone screen if it's lashed to your handlebars, adjusting in real time based on how hard you're working.

Stuff says ★★★★★

▼ DATA KING

GARMIN VIVOACTIVE HR**R5 200 /
garmin.co.za**

Part fitness tracker, part smartwatch, Garmin's Vivoactive HR is an excellent all-rounder. Using a combination of built-in GPS and an optical heart-rate sensor, it will measure time, distance, speed and calories. But it's when you add separate speed and cadence sensors that its cycling skills start to show. Even so, without those it's still a very capable gym buddy.

Stuff says ★★★★★

**BEE LINE**

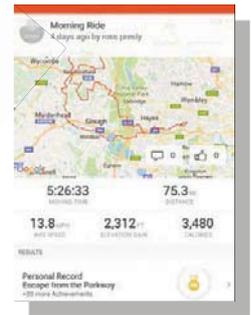
Turn-by-turn directions can be more annoying than a back-seat driver. If just knowing you're heading vaguely in the right direction is enough for you, BeeLine's smartphone-powered compass shows which way to point your front wheel and how far you've got to go till you get there, with an e-paper display.

**R1 700 (import) /
beeline.co****ZACKEES**

When cycling in the dark, the closer you can get to resembling a jumbo jet coming in to land, the better. These cycling gloves have pads between the index finger and thumb which, when touched together, activate a bright flashing light. The summer pair is fingerless, while the winter ones are touchscreen-compatible.

**R1 000 /
zackees.com**

▼ THE APP

**STRAVA**

It's all very well racing against yourself but there's only so much bragging you can do in the mirror without things getting a bit Travis Bickle. Strava's community is the No1 place for comparing your stats.

Free / iOS, Android

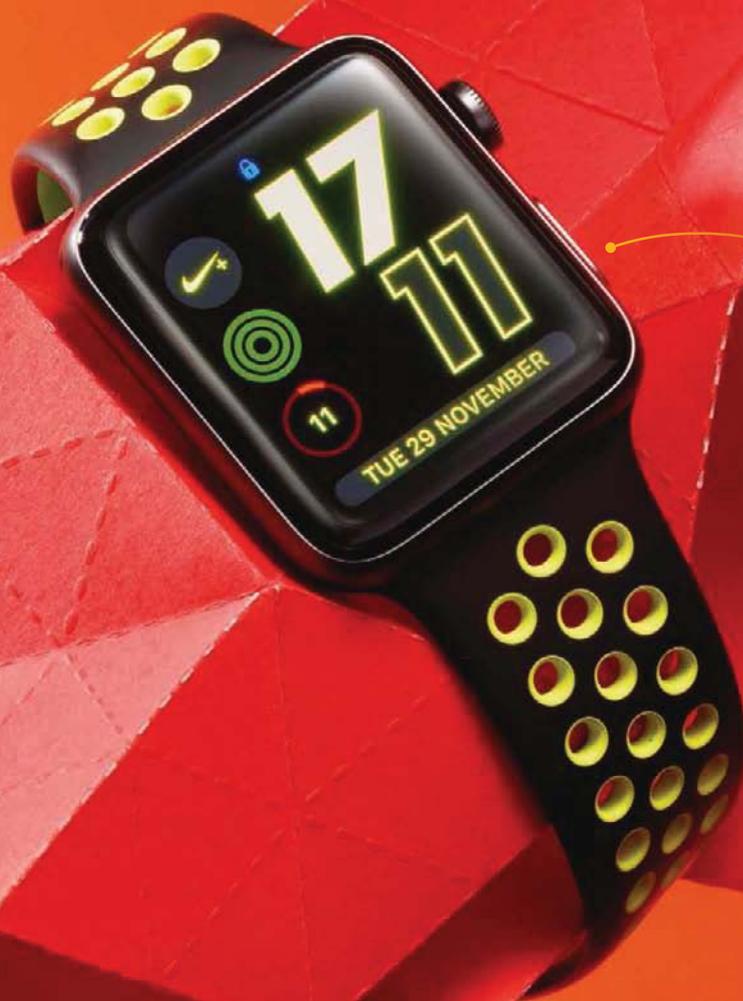
GOING UP

The Vivoactive HR has a barometric altimeter, which you won't find on some of Garmin's more expensive trackers, so it can tell you exactly how many flights of stairs you've climbed.

KEEP ON MOOVIN'

Wear it all the time and the Now will track your steps and monitor how well you sleep; but those are probably its weakest features, with that data relatively difficult to track down within the app.

SWIMMING



GP-YES
There are few things more enthusiasm-sapping than hanging outside your house in your running gear waiting for your watch to talk to a satellite... the Series 2 locks on in a matter of seconds.

▼ THE PRO CHOICE

APPLE WATCH SERIES 2 NIKE+

from R6 900 / myistore.co.za

Not making the original Watch waterproof was a bizarre move but the Series 2 suffers from no such aquaphobia, with both pool and open-water swims available to select from the Workout app.

The accelerometer does a brilliant job of counting strokes and lengths when pool swimming, and the speedy built-in GPS sensor produces almost exactly the expected distances outdoors. Water will interfere with the signal, though, so you'll need to let it have regular air – you might want to stick to front crawl.

The only part of the Watch Series 2 that isn't sealed off from the H₂O is the speaker – because physics – so the port will fill up when submerged. But, thanks to

a neat trick we'll call 'spurt mode', you can digitally wring out your Apple Watch by twisting the digital crown. Your Watch will spit out any liquid that's inside the speaker, leaving the sound unmuffled.

Open the Activity app and you'll find calories burned, distance travelled, average speed, average heart rate and even a map, colour-coded to immediately show you the parts of your session where you were over or under your average by 10%. You don't need this snazzy Nike+ edition of the Watch to do any of this, but it will get you some exclusive faces and a special strap with air holes that make it more flexible and more comfortable to wear when you're giving it 110%.



BRAGI THE DASH

These earphones are both waterproof and totally wireless, so you won't risk getting tangled up in cables while you're focusing on your strokes. They'll track your lengths and breaths but, more importantly, there's a music player built in, so you don't need to take your phone in for a dunking.

R6 000 / takealot.com



SPEEDO FASTSKIN LZR RACER X RACING SUITS

The drag caused by swimming in those baggy boardies might make you feel like you're working harder but it only slows you down. To achieve quicker times you'll want Speedo's compression cossies, which help you slip through the water like a greased-up penguin.

from R2 000 / speedo.co.za

STUFF SAYS The best smartwatch is now amphibious ★★★★★

MOOV ON UP

Using the data the HR collects, Moov's app can give you an indication of your fitness level and estimate your VO2 Max. A six-hour battery life means it should last about a week before it needs recharging.

WRISTER MOTIVATOR

The Flex 2 does a great job of motivating you to reach your 10k steps a day, or letting you snooze for eight hours a night without coming across like a nag. Oh, and it'll do phone notifications.

▼ **HANDS-ON**▼ **DIVE BUDDY**▼ **BUDGET BUY**▼ **THE APP****FITBIT FLEX 2**

R1 900 / fitbit.co.za

Whether you wear Fitbit's Flex 2 on a wristband or stowed in a pendant hanging around your neck, it'll take note of pretty much everything you do, from sleeping to calories burned – but it's the submersible skills that we're interested in here. It's the first waterproof Fitbit, tested down to 50m, so you can jump straight in the pool (or sea) and it'll automatically get to work monitoring your strokes and wirelessly sending your stats to the app.

Stuff says ★★★★★☆

MOOV HR

Rtba / quantifi.co.za

Moov thinks your best heart is in your head. That might sound stupid but your temple, with its thin skin and lack of moving parts, is ideal for taking your pulse. The Moov HR slips inside a special swimming cap (or sweat band if you're on dry land) to hold it in place while it records BPM changes. If you want to monitor distance or strokes you'll need to pair it with a compatible fitness band or smartwatch, but for amphibious ticker tracking it looks like a keeper.

Due March

**ARENA COBRA ULTRA**

What are you scared of? It's just a bit of water. It won't hurt you. Unless it's full of chemicals, of course. Which it most probably is. Arena's race-friendly goggles will keep your eyes from stinging, and they'll also minimise drag and give you as wide a field of underwater vision as possible.

R650 / sportsmanswarehouse.co.za

**WITHINGS BODY CARDIO**

There's only so much tech you can take into the pool without weighing yourself down, but Withings' latest smart scales are worth stepping onto once you've dried off. They track your weight, BMI and more, but it's their ability to work out the 'pulse wave velocity' of your arteries that makes them stand out.

R3 000 / withings.com

**MYSWIMPRO**

Packed with swimming workouts tailored for different strokes, distances, speeds and more, MySwimPro has guidance for all levels. Just don't forget to put your phone down before you dive in...

Free [iAPs] / iOS, Android

MORE SPORTS

▼ THE SOCCER PLAYER

PLAYERTEK

from R2 900 + R150/month / playertek.com



Most GPS trackers for soccer are only available to actual teams. You know, ones that don't just put the fattest guy in goal and stop every 15 minutes for a vape break. But any old carthorse can sign up for PlayerTek, although you might not get the most out of its Sky Sports-style stats if you're the kind of player who puts the 'mess' in Messi. Wear the GPS pod while you play and after the final whistle it'll give you an Opta-esque heat map of your game (that you can compare with actual Premier League players), plus stats on the distance you covered, your top speed and intensity, with 5-minute breakdowns to see exactly how badly you flagged after the hour mark.

▼ NOW ADD THIS



ADIDAS COPA MUNDIAL

Brightly coloured boots will only attract unwanted attention from hairy centre-halves, but if you want something less conspicuous that doesn't mean you have to raid lost property. Copa Mundials are classics and you'll remain under the radar to all except the most cultured boot connoisseurs. R2 000 / totalsports.co.za



▼ THE GYM BUNNY

BEAST SENSOR

from \$249 / thisisbeast.com

You think that flimsy little fitness band is going to be able to keep up when you hit the gym and start pumping iron? No, if you're lifting serious weights, you need a serious tracker to spot you. For each lift the Beast Sensor will collect stats on things such as power, speed, explosiveness and how many Schwarzeneggers you could eat for breakfast. It'll send live feedback to your phone's screen and guide you towards reaching your goals, so you can keep an eye on how you're doing without having to get a personal trainer to spit all over your face. Plus the sensor's magnetic so you can slap it on the weight machine.

▼ NOW ADD THIS



MATADOR DROPLET WET BAG

Putting your stinking gym kit in your bag with your laptop is a surefire way to get a table to yourself in Starbucks, but it's not a good way to make friends. Pack a Droplet bag, however, and you can keep it separately stinky without having to carry an additional bag. \$15 / matadorup.com



▼ THE EXTREME DUDE

NIXON MISSION**R8 000 / nixon.com**

There's not a lot of point in counting steps when you're surfing six-foot waves or carving through powder at 3000m above sea level. So while Nixon's Mission isn't like most fitness watches, if your sport of choice is gnarlier than a quick jog around the block it might be a better match. There's no heart-rate monitor, so you can't find out exactly how much you scared yourself, but the Trace Snow and Trace Surf apps use GPS to track your on-piste or in-the-water activities, plus there's a thermometer, altimeter, barometer and compass on top of the usual gyroscope and accelerometer. Read the full review on p78.

▼ NOW ADD THIS

**GOPRO HERO 5 SESSION**

The only thing better than riding giants is having the footage to prove it. GoPro is still the go-to name for filming in gnarl-o-vision and the Hero 5 Session is the most mobile of the range. Despite being barely bigger than an Oxo cube it's tough and waterproof, and still shoots in 4K.

R6 000 / incredible.co.za

▼ THE GOLFER

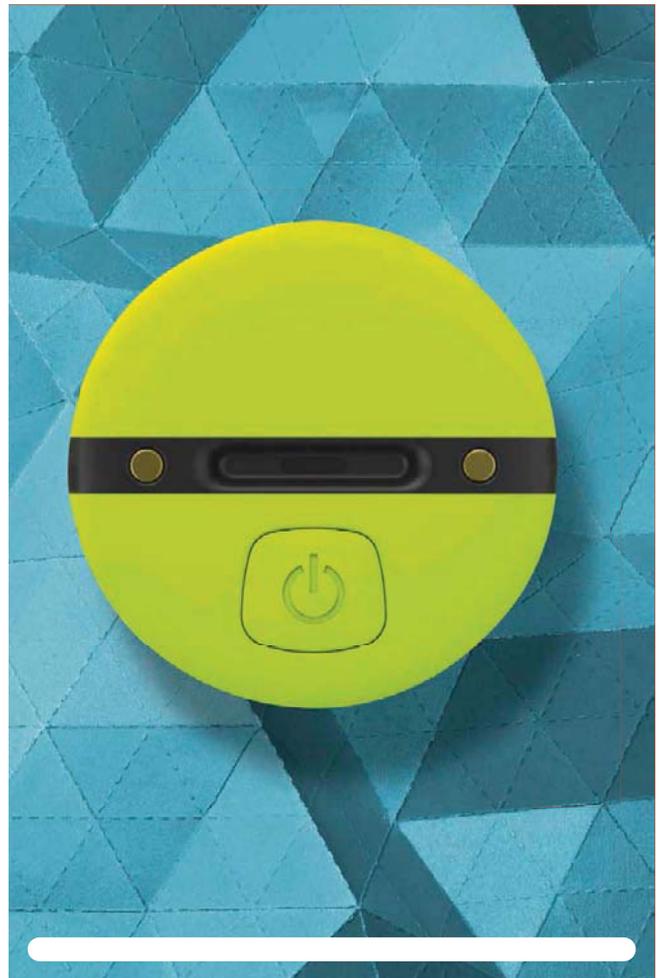
ZEPP GOLF 2**R3 800 / dandashop.co.za**

Golf's hardly the kind of sport to get your pulse zipping but it's a good way to accidentally walk a few kms every weekend. While you're doing that you might as well try to get good at it, and a Zepp 2 sensor riding on the back of your glove should help. It tracks your swing in 3D, measuring club speed, club plane, tempo and backswing length, while your phone in your pocket monitors hip movement. Course Mode tracks hole by hole and allows you to build consistency from round to round, with the app offering tips on where you can improve, so when you hit the driving range you'll know exactly what to work on. You'll become Tiger Woods in no time, although womanising finesse isn't included.

▼ NOW ADD THIS

**BUSHNELL NEO ION**

Who needs a human caddy when a watch can do the same job? Bushnell's GPS watch includes yardage info for over 35 000 courses around the world, plus it'll detect which one you're teeing off from and automatically advance for each hole, calculating shot distances as you go.

R3 000 / takealot.com

App:roved

FOR SYNTHY SLICKERS

ARP ODYSSEI

Regular readers know the drill: Korg releases a new iOS synth, we're smitten. This time it's the 2015 recreation of 1972's ARP Odyssey duophonic synth that's been turned into an app, with sliders aplenty and an arpeggiator to die for. Some presets are tremendous to the point that you can hold down a few keys and consider yourself a master composer. Plus, the cheekily named Popkorn 2017 preset plays a take on the riff from Hot Butter's cult hit.

Stuff says ★★★★★
R300 / iOS

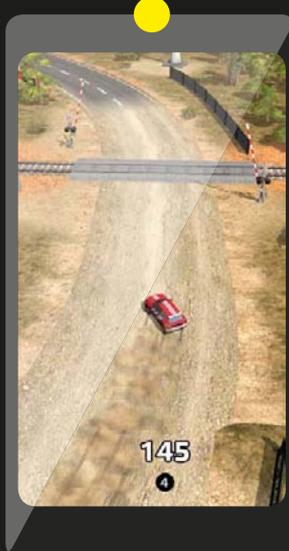


FOR RAGGED RACERS

Go Rally

Although this one has 'Rally' in the title and you're bombing around rally tracks in a rally car, *Go Rally* feels more like a trials game. Bite-sized races and windy courses demand that you learn and memorise every section of track to drift and turn at just the right moment. It's fast and fun, if a touch soulless (and the post-race comments from opponents are moronic). Still, we love the track designer, where you can scribble out a tortuous route and inflict it on the world.

Stuff says ★★★★☆
R80 / iOS, tvOS



FOR TENACIOUS TUBERS

Mini Metro

Dealing with the real London Underground might make you want to hack off your own arm with an Oyster card, but *Mini Metro* is a delight. You draw lines between stations, ushering geometric passengers to their destinations. Their movements generate an ambient soundtrack, and it's all rather blissful... until the passenger numbers ramp up. Then it becomes a tense, fraught game of quick thinking. At that point, you'll be wishing for delays for once.

Stuff says ★★★★★
R79 / Android • R15 / iOS

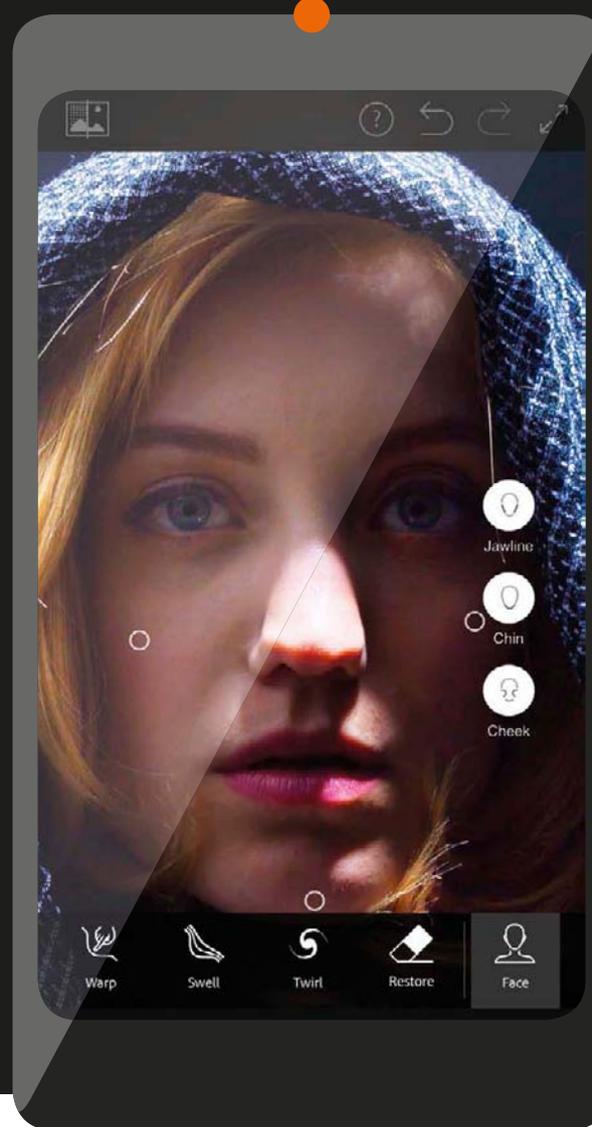


FOR FLAWLESS FACES

Photoshop Fix

Having been around for a year on iOS, another of Photoshop's Mini-Mes makes it to Android at last. There's a lot of 'seen it, done it' about the app, until you venture into the often excellent healing tools for removing blemishes, and Liquify. With the latter, you can select various features to mess around with. Want your eyes to pop? Done. Fancy a new jawline? Easy. Virtual nose job? Sure. And unlike such changes in the real world, these ones are free and easily reversible.

Stuff says ★★★★☆
Free / Android, iOS





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Lenovo Tab 3 730X LTE

If you're looking for a tablet that's compact enough for use on-the-go and versatile enough to keep the whole family happy, the Lenovo Tab 3 is the choice for you. Great for gaming and watching videos, this colourful, splash-resistant 7in tablet handles multiple users easily and includes a safe mode for kids. The Tab 3 takes superb photos with the 5MP rear camera, and the 2MP front camera is great for selfies.

*** Limited to 200 units**

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MUSICA
A WORLD AWAITS

Top of the 'tops

What matters more in a laptop: style, stamina or being able to play Skyrim with all the effects? Read this before you buy one...

Laptops are changing. They're getting smaller, lighter and smarter.

And this isn't just the inevitable march of tech in action: they're fighting to survive, as more of us use phones and iPads for tasks we'd have been relying on a laptop for a couple of years ago. Judging by these five contenders, however, we won't be hearing any death rattles just yet.

Each of the laptop giants has adopted a different survival tactic. Apple is starting to merge iPhone and MacBook, weaving Siri into the laptop's hardware, adding a Touch ID scanner and a cleverly dynamic OLED touch-panel.

Microsoft has tried to make its Surface Book the only device you need, bar a phone, anyway. Its screen pops off for tablet fun, there's a pressure-sensitive stylus, and a special Nvidia GPU boosts its gaming chops.

Then there's the blinged-out HP Spectre, gaming-minded Razer Blade Stealth and slinky-screened Dell XPS 13. All great, but which is right for you?



1 HP Spectre 13

One of the slimmest, lightest laptops in the world, the Spectre is the most eye-catching computer HP has made to date.

2 Microsoft Surface Book

An ambitious hybrid with pressure-sensitive stylus and a custom gaming processor by Nvidia.

3 Dell XPS 13

Dell's 'virtually borderless' InfinityEdge screen makes the XPS 13 significantly smaller than the average 13in laptop.

4 Razer Blade Stealth

The Blade Stealth is a slim ultraportable. Hook it up to the Core desktop module with a good GPU and it turns into a gaming rig.

5 Apple MacBook Pro with Touch Bar

Pricier editions of the MacBook Pro have a fancy OLED touch-panel where the function keys used to be.



Apple reinvents the laptop with... a strip of emojis?

The MacBook Pro has been a favourite of designers and, well, pros for years, but Apple's latest laptop has caused a bit of a stir.

This new version chucks away 'old' features like normal USB ports and a memory card reader in favour of an OLED touch-panel replacing the F keys.

It's the only touchscreen you'll find on this laptop, but its virtual

buttons automatically change to suit the app running – you're not stuck with emojis. Play a video and you get a progress bar; in Safari you get teeny, tappable versions of your open tabs; and in Pages you get word suggestions popping up as you type, just like an iPhone keyboard.

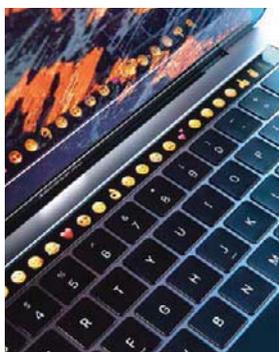
So the MacBook Pro is getting more iPhone-y, and not quite in

the way we imagined. A few people might recoil in horror, particularly as the Touch Bar reduces the battery life by a considerable amount – and Apple has added the same love/hate wafer-thin keyboard you get on other new MacBooks. But it really is something we don't see often in laptops: a new and exciting feature.

Crafty devs can use this bar as they like. In the coming months it could morph from a fun, if horribly expensive, gimmick into a crucial feature that makes Windows PCs look like they're stuck in the 1990s.

And even if it doesn't, this is still a brilliant portable buddy for those who prefer their laptops to speak macOS.

● APPLE MACBOOK PRO WITH TOUCH BAR FROM R32700 ★★★★★



PERFORMANCE
Battery blaster

This MacBook is powered by last-generation Intel Skylake CPUs rather than the latest Kaby Lake type. They're a smidgeon less fast. Battery life isn't the best either, with a 90min film draining away 21% of its life.



OLED screen tech makes the new Touch Bar look great, and just as black as the keys it sits above. It's not Retina-grade, but you won't notice unless you're up close.

DESIGN
Nice pad

The new MacBook Pro looks like the older version if you squint, but it's totally different. Skinnier screen surrounds in every direction make it a lot smaller, and somehow Apple has managed to cram in a ridiculously large touchpad. As on the 12in MacBook, Force Touch lets you hard-press the pad for a deeper look into apps and bits of data without having to touch the keyboard. MacBook veterans might find it hard to get on with the new ultra-shallow keyboard and USB-C connectors, though. Get those adaptors ready.



FEATURES
Phone you up

It finally happened: Apple is starting to squish iPhone and MacBook together, in preparation for the single iDevice endgame. To the far right of the new touch-panel is a Touch ID finger scanner just like the iPhone's – and right next to it is a Siri button. The MacBook easily has the loudest, beefiest speakers of this entire test, a whopping 13dB louder than the Microsoft Surface Book's. The high-spec Thunderbolt (USB-C) ports should future-proof its connectivity, even if they can be a pain right now.



SCREEN
Apple of my eye

The MacBook Pro's screen is beautiful. There's slightly deeper colour than before, but the tone remains natural. It's not the peppiest-looking screen here, but might be the best if you're not after *Candy Crush*-grade colour saturation.





USE IT WITH...



Pixelmator
R480 /
pixelmator.com

Photoshop costs a fortune and doesn't support the Touch Bar at launch. Pixelmator is a fraction of the price, does nearly everything Adobe's image editor can, and allows you to customise that clever OLED panel.

Stuff says ★★★★★

And also...

Airmail 3
R150 /
airmailapp.com

Airmail lets you create Touch Bar shortcuts for zipping around your inbox.

Apple continues to squeeze our hardware connectivity rations: this MacBook Pro has four USB-C ports; the version without Touch Bar (from R27 500) has just two

Dell calls this an InfinityEdge display. It's the secret to making a 13in laptop close in size to an 11in one. Dell is the only laptop maker pushing this technology so far.

USE IT WITH...



VLC Media Player

Free / violetan.org

You probably watch most of your videos on YouTube and Netflix, but what are you going to do when your Wi-Fi connection goes down? VLC will play anything you throw at it, including 360° videos.

Stuff says ★★★★★

And also...

Notepad++

Free / notepad-plus-plus.org

Kiss the standard Windows notepad goodbye with this free replacement.

The impossible screen with a cutting-edge design

Want a laptop you can take anywhere and always rely on?

With features that look as though they've been lifted from a sci-fi film, maybe this Dell isn't for you. But if you care more about how sleek the thing is to use than how 'safe' it looks, step right up.

The Dell XPS 13 is the perfect storm of portability, stunning screen quality and battery life

that makes the fanciest MacBook Pro seem like it's powered by AAs from a charity shop.

It's the screen that should get jaws dropping first, though. Just look at it: there's so little surround, this would have seemed like a teenager's impossible Photoshop concept design a few years ago. This makes the XPS 13's footprint tiny even though it has a 13.3in

screen and full-size keyboard. The result is that it'll fit in a bag with no trouble, which is important considering a laptop's signature skill is portability.

Sure, it's not as light or slim as the HP Spectre, but when you get almost double the battery life into the bargain, we don't mind. It lasts for up to 12.5 hours of movie playback, which is bloomin'

brilliant considering it has an Intel Core i5 or i7 processor. This will get you through a day's work and let you play a bit of *The Sims 4* on the way home. And you get a touchscreen too, which is still not a given.

The Surface Book beats it for gaming, but we still have no idea if/when we'll actually see it in South African stores.

● DELL XPS 13 FROM R20 000 ★★★★★

Aluminium next to a keyboard looks great, but the soft-touch paint is positively strokable. And it's super-rigid carbon fibre, not shoddy old plastic.

SCREEN

Take the edge off

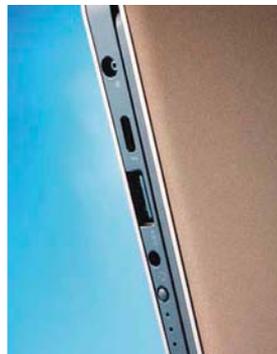
The screen stretches out to the edges of the laptop, leaving a few millimetres of surround. It's a super-sharp 3200x1800 LCD with great contrast. The MacBook Pro and Razer Blade Stealth have deeper colour, but it's still a stunner.



DESIGN

Go go gadget

This ain't no flashy laptop made just to look good on a magazine page. The Dell XPS feels as if it's built to withstand a beating, and uses a soft-touch interior to give your hands somewhere comfy to rest. The killer USP is that, while it's not the lightest, this is the smallest 13in laptop going – and that kind of portability is a real a bonus if you'd rather carry a smaller bag. So it's super-practical... but you do get a choice of gold or silver aluminium, used on the lid and underside of this tiny tearaway.



FEATURES

The people pleaser

Apple has gone 'our way or the highway' with its latest laptops, but Dell tries to please as many people as possible. You get old-style USB connectors as well as the new USB-C and, thank the heavens, an SD card slot. There's a touchscreen for a modern feel, but also a proper keyboard you can tap away all day without your fingers complaining. It's low on feature fluff but top-quality all round. There is one neat extra: a little LED indicator that'll tell you the battery level even while the laptop is asleep and closed.



PERFORMANCE

A life saver

You get a choice of the new Intel Kaby Lake Core i5 and i7 CPUs here: no special gaming skills, but enough power to do just about anything else. Battery life sets it apart, a 90min film using up just 12% of charge.



The slinky Spectre makes light work of most rivals

Most HP laptops are solid, reliable machines that focus on getting you bang for your buck. When the Spectre showed up and became the most instantly recognisable laptop of the year, it was a bit of a surprise.

Gone is the familiar silver and black of your everyday laptop. The Spectre 13 has a bling-tastic chromed gold hinge that looks like

the computer equivalent of fancy jewellery. It makes all the others here look plain.

This machine's real claim to fame is its thickness. The Spectre 13 is a mere 10.4mm thick and weighs only 1.1kg. It's essentially a laptop-shaped prescription for curing cricked necks and sore backs across the world. And even if you need the slimmest, lightest

laptop going, there's more to like here than just a fancy hinge.

This is an uncompromising vision of a laptop primed for the future. All of its connectors are USB-C type, and even with the included adaptor you may have trouble using some of your accessories. These USB-Cs are not designed to power things like external drives. It really doesn't

get on well with other hardware. Plus those connectors all sit on the back, which isn't handy.

But all of that will fade into the background if you just want something to work and play on. Its keyboard has a deeper, more responsive feel than some rivals, and while the trackpad is absolutely tiny compared to a MacBook's, it feels great.

● HP SPECTRE 13 FROM R30000 ★★★★★



The HP's secret sauce is its build. This laptop is made of a combination of carbon fibre and metal, allowing for an ultra-rigid frame that barely weighs anything.

The speakers are made in association with Bang & Olufsen, but they're nothing on those of the MacBook Pro or Razer Blade Stealth. At least they're stereo.

USE IT WITH...



FL Studio Groove
R120 /
image-line.com

This miniature sequencer has an entire studio's worth of built-in synths, sounds, melodies and loops. Mix 'em together on the piano roll or drumkit, then record and export them.

Stuff says ★★★★★

DESIGN
Beauty over brains

Slim. Light. Stylish. That sums up the aluminium and carbon fibre HP Spectre. As a result, the ports live on the back, the screen hinge doesn't fold back that much, and HP totally redesigned its cooling system to fit.



FEATURES
Nothing special

No silly gimmicks, no stylus, no touchscreen. It's a laptop, and that's it. We're down with that, although day-to-day the lack of a memory card slot and those picky USB-C slots on the back may get on your nerves.



SCREEN
Off-colour

The Spectre has a good screen, but it doesn't come close to the other contenders. It's a 13.3in 1080p display – not as sharp as its rivals. Plus, colour tones just aren't as deep and punchy as the best here.



PERFORMANCE
Small wonder

It's as slim as you like, but the HP Spectre still has a proper CPU, an Intel Core i7-6500U. That's not as up-to-date as the Razer Blade Stealth's, but this older CPU isn't insta-KO'd. It'll have a crack at anything.



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The Swiss army knife of laptops is up for anything

Say what you like about Microsoft – it certainly is trying. The Surface Book is one of the most versatile, feature-packed laptops in the world. Strap in.

You can pull off the screen to use this as a giant 13.5in tablet, and it has clever 'muscle wire' switches that lock the display firmly in place when it's rolling as a laptop. You get a stylus with

pressure-sensitivity too, so you can use the Surface Book as a scarily expensive sketchpad.

This is also easily the best roving gaming machine in our test, thanks to a special graphics chipset cooked up by Nvidia. While it's not a patch on a proper gaming PC, you'll still get far better results than with anything else here. Playing *Thief* at 720p you

get 41fps – a whopping 17fps more than the HP Spectre, turning compromise into pleasure. Sure, 720p is not optimum resolution, but this was never meant to be a true gaming PC.

So why isn't this the best laptop in the universe? Well, it's a lot thicker and heavier than anything else here – weighing 50% more than the HP Spectre

that it beats so easily in a gaming drag race. The Surface Book also just isn't very cool, despite that sci-fi-grade hinge. It's very angular, it feels like it's going to tip over on your knees, and the 3:2 aspect is just a bit weird.

Still, its multitasking skills are mighty impressive and it's really useful for those creative types. This is a true nerd-pleaser.

● MICROSOFT SURFACE BOOK Rtba ★★★★★☆

To release the screen for tablet conversion you press a button in the Windows 10 software, rather than just releasing a catch. It's smarter than the average hybrid.

The Surface Book may be a bit plain in this crowd but its hinge is mesmerising, folding up like the plates of an arthropod. That earns it a few more geek points.



USE IT WITH...



Sketchable

Free / siliconbenders.com

Put the Surface Pen to good use with this digital sketchbook.

It's got all the brushes and tools you'll need, plus layers for more complex designs, and it'll work with Microsoft's Surface Dial when it arrives.

Stuff says ★★★★★☆

DESIGN
Read the mag

This is the one laptop in our mega-test made of magnesium rather than aluminium. It's not cool to the touch and it isn't shiny, but this helps keep the weight sensible and makes the Surface Book super-rigid.



FEATURES
Tablet in disguise

A pressure-sensitive stylus, a decent GPU, a detachable tablet screen and a keyboard deep enough to write a novel on: what more could you want? It is a bit chunky, though – nothing like the super-slim HP Spectre.



SCREEN
Fair and square

The Surface Book's 13.5in screen has more of a tablet vibe than most thanks to its squarer 3:2 aspect ratio. As long as you don't mind this it's great, with 3000x2000 resolution, good contrast and solid colour.



PERFORMANCE
Book of power

This Surface Book uses last-gen Intel CPUs rather than new Kaby Lake ones, yet only the Razer with the Core add-on beats it for gaming. It also outlasts all but the Dell, a 90min movie slicing just 12% off the battery.



Stealth is a game changer, and it's black to the Core

Forget silver, forget rose gold. This is the Stealth bomber of ultraportable laptops. It's black, it's slim, it's made of aluminium. It is not initially what you might expect to see from gaming maestro Razer, though.

On its own, the Blade Stealth is a pretty regular slim and light computer. You could whip it out in Wimpy without looking like

a one-person LAN party – as long as you toned down the Technicolor rave that is the LED-backlit keyboard first. Gotta keep the gamers happy, right?

There's no great big graphics card inside to weigh it down, but if you can afford the upgrade for the Core module you can turn the Blade Stealth into a gaming powerhouse. This box plugs into

the Thunderbolt port on the side and is a bit like a tiny PC case that only holds a graphics processor. Warn your wallet, though, because the Core doesn't come with such a card. A top-end Nvidia GTX 1080 costs a whole lot more, never mind the upgrade fee.

It's still a smart way to get a high-end gaming rig without burdening your house with one

of those giant PC towers, though. In the trade-off you also get a laptop only slightly larger than a MacBook Pro that's significantly cheaper and looks a bit different to just about everything else that's out there. Just make sure you like black, because that's the only colour on offer. It could be the MacBook's evil twin, and we like it.

● **RAZER BLADE STEALTH RtbA** ★★★★★



SCREEN
Perfect Dark

The Blade Stealth has a 4K or QHD screen, both 12.5in, and the 4K one is one of the highest-spec screens seen on a laptop. Contrast is fab and it's easily the most colourful display here. One look is enough to raise your blood sugar level.



This Razer has the most customisable keyboard backlight you can get in an ultraportable, with control over its brightness and colours.

DESIGN
StarCraft

This is what you get when you take gaming PC DNA and insert it into an Ultrabook embryo. The Blade Stealth is slim, light and all-aluminium but has touches you don't see in style laptops. There's a green light-up Razer logo on the back (yes, you can turn this off) but the best bit is the backlighting of the keyboard. You can set it to any colour of the rainbow to take the brutish edge off all that black, or make it fire off a light show using one of the many inbuilt profiles. It'll even mimic the colours of a roaring fire. How cosy.



FEATURES
A Link Between Worlds

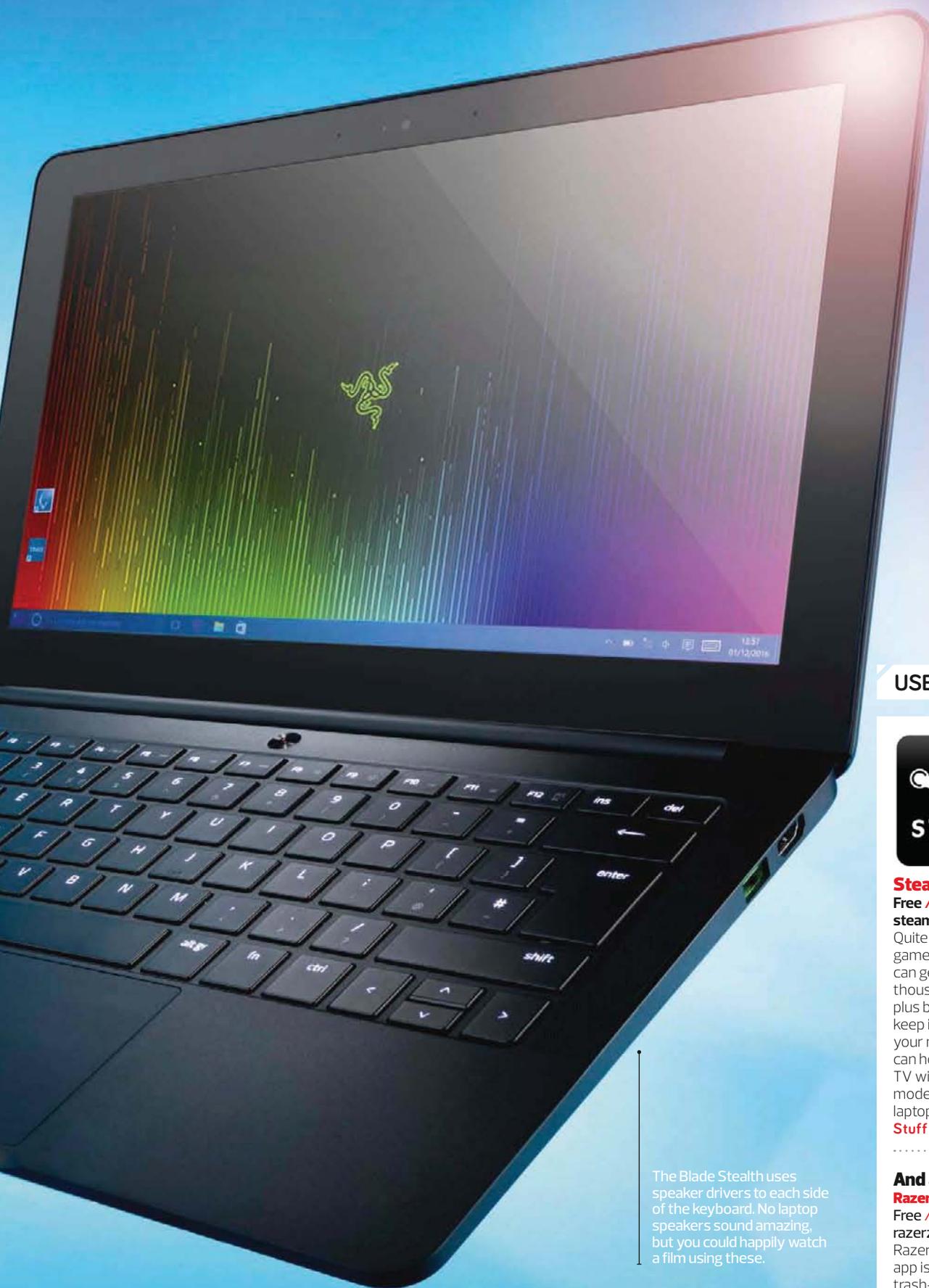
Razer hasn't thrown out the old in favour of the new like Apple has. You still get two trusty old USB ports here as well as a full-size HDMI, making it a doddle to hook up your TV or a monitor. There's just the one USB-C Thunderbolt socket, used to connect the Core gaming module, and thankfully this add-on will power the laptop while connected. At home you'll probably want to use proper speakers, but the Blade Stealth is only second to the MacBook Pro with its loud and meaty inbuilt drivers.



PERFORMANCE
Half-Life

Without an external GPU, the Blade Stealth lacks top-class gaming power. Still, the latest Intel Kaby Lake CPUs and Core i7 specs make it a solid enough performer and battery life matches the MacBook Pro, a 90min film eating 21%.





USE IT WITH...



Steam

Free / store.

steampowered.com

Quite simply the best game storefront you can get. Steam has thousands of games plus built-in chat to keep in touch with your mates, and you can hook it up to your TV with Big Picture mode to turn your laptop into a console.

Stuff says ★★★★★

And also...

Razer Comms

Free /

razerzone.com

Razer's VOIP chat app is perfect for trash-talking your online enemies.

The Blade Stealth uses speaker drivers to each side of the keyboard. No laptop speakers sound amazing, but you could happily watch a film using these.

The winner is... Dell XPS 13

In a year or two we might look back and wonder how we ever got by without a MacBook Pro TouchBar.

But for now we'll put a few thousand rand back in our pockets and shack up with the Dell, thanks.

It's tiny for a 13.3in laptop thanks to the amazing InfinityEdge display panel, which is handy for lugging it about, and there are no compromises inside.

You get all-day battery life, enough power for video editing rather than just the time-wasting most of us do with our laptops, and Dell hasn't tried to drop-kick us into the future with ports that none of us use yet. There's not much to dislike, and if you're happy with 1080p resolution it's also among the cheapest.

**TEST
WINNER**

+ Now add these



Incase Icon sleeve

A smart-looking sleeve for a smart-looking laptop that opens on top, rather than on the side. Faux-fur lining keeps your shiny new workhorse you've just spent a fortune on looking shiny.

R900 / myistore.co.za



Dell Power Companion

If the XPS 13's terrific battery life isn't good enough for you, grab a Power Companion.

This is a 12,000mAh external battery that almost doubles the laptop's stamina. A holiday lifesaver.

R1700 / dell.laptopdirect.co.za



Dell UltraSharp 27in monitor

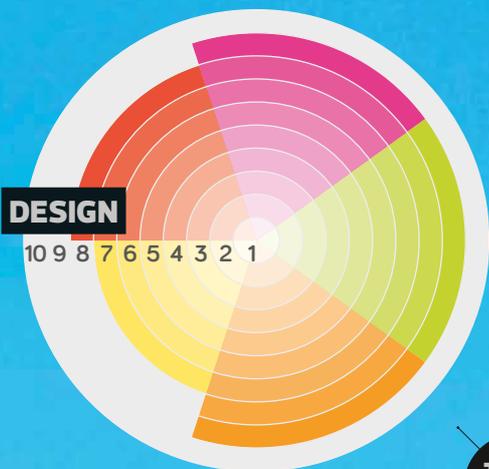
You can get one of Dell's UltraSharp monitors with the same slim-bezel InfinityEdge style as the laptop, and a 1440p IPS screen.

R10 900 / dell.laptopdirect.co.za

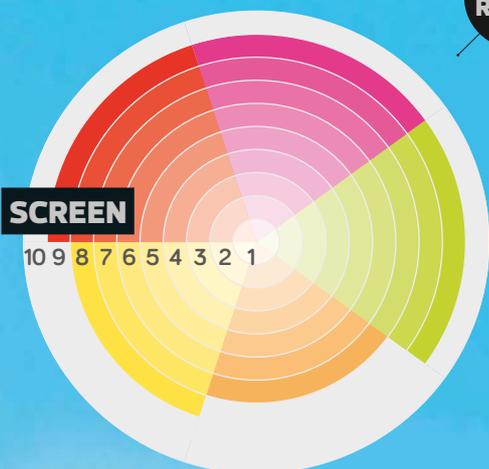
How to buy a laptop
p103

THE SUMMARY

● Apple ● Dell ● HP ● Microsoft ● Razer



TECH RATER



WHAT'S NEXT?

Is everyone going to start copying Apple by putting display touch-panels into their laptops? Some critics aren't loving the new Touch Bar, but as long as the new Pro isn't a sales disaster you can expect to see plenty of copycats popping up.

But there's no system-level support yet for such hardware in Windows 10. Manufacturers will have to put extra work in to make such bars useful.

A revolution that's already happening, though, is USB-C. Good old USBs are slowly disappearing from top-end laptops, and we'll soon see cheaper models start to follow. USB-C can use Thunderbolt 3, a standard so powerful it can fling 5000MB of data a second. Just one port can hook up several peripherals.

Efficiency is the order of the day, and that's what we'll get from Intel's next major CPU generation: Cannonlake. It's due in late 2017. More power, better battery life.

		Screen	CPU	RAM	GPU	Battery	Dimensions
1st	 <p>Dell XPS 13 The clever InfinityEdge screen is the standout feature, but the Dell XPS 13 nails every other element too. from R20000 / dell.co.za</p>	13.3in 3200x1200 LCD	Intel Core i5/ i7 Kaby Lake generation	8GB	Intel HD 620	60Wh	304x200x 15mm, 1.2kg
2nd	 <p>Apple MacBook Pro with Touch Bar As ever, Apple has aced the desirability factor with a fancy touch-panel and fingerprint scanner. from R32700 / myistore.co.za</p>	13.3in 2560x1600 LCD	Intel Core i5/ i7 Skylake generation	8GB	Intel Iris 550	49.2Wh	304x212x 15mm, 1.4kg
3rd	 <p>Microsoft Surface Book The only hybrid on test, the only stylus-enabled laptop, and the best at gaming on the go. Rtba / microsoftstore.com/za</p>	13.5in 3000x2000 PixelSense	Intel Core i5/ i7 Skylake generation	8GB/16GB	Nvidia custom GPU	70Wh	312x232x 23mm, 1.5kg
4th	 <p>Razer Blade Stealth A gaming laptop at home, a simple ultraportable when you're not – the Stealth is a two-faced beast. Rtba / evetech.co.za</p>	12.5in 3840x2160 IGZO LCD	Intel Core i7-7500U	8GB/16GB	Intel HD 620	53.6Wh	321x206x 13.1mm, 1.3kg
5th	 <p>HP Spectre 13 The slimmest and lightest laptop in the group also makes the boldest style choices. from R30000 / hpshop.co.za</p>	13.3in 1920x1080 LCD	Intel Core i7-6500U	8GB	Intel HD 520	38Wh	325x229x 10mm, 1.1kg

P R O M O T I O N

BUY NOW & GET INSTANT CASH BACK



Scan this QR code with **WeChat** to buy the **Dell i5 2-in-1 laptop and tablet** right now with **WeChat Wallet**



Was R15 999
NOW R14 999
INCLUDES **FREE DELIVERY** IN RSA

PLUS

WeChat's Crazy Cash promotion lets you **get up to R500 cash back** on your purchase



For help setting up your WeChat Wallet turn to p8

Dell i5 2-in-1 laptop and tablet

The Inspiron 13 7000 Series 2-in-1 offers a rich set of standard features and an impressive array of options. It supports four modes (laptop, tent, stand and tablet) while combining the beauty and strength of forged aluminium with upscale features and impressive battery life. The 13.3in Truelife LED-backlit IPS touch display with wide viewing angle is perfect for work or play.

* Limited to 75 units

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The longest Dre

Thanks to new Apple tech, nothing Beats these likeable cans for wireless range and stamina

R5 000 / myistore.co.za

■ The first Dr Dre / Jony Ive collaboration has clearly been built specifically for the jack-less iPhone 7, with colours matching the new phone range – but Apple's R&D team has also helped out with the tech underneath. The W1 chipset is a real leap forward for wireless range, ease of pairing and battery life.

■ Normal Bluetooth performance is fine up to 15m away, but the dropouts start quickly beyond that. If you're using a new iPhone, however, wireless range with the Apple W1 tech jumps up hugely: we could go practically anywhere in our four-storey office, even for a sprinkle, and keep listening to music from the phone on our desk.

■ While Sennheiser's Momentum 2.0 Wireless cans will keep going for 22 hours, these will nearly double that. In two weeks of use, we didn't need to recharge them once.

■ 'Beats means bass' is as true as ever, but this time the treble is crisp too, even at high volumes. The only downside is that they also leak a lot of noise – if you turn the volume up in mid-funeral, you're going to annoy people.

■ In design these headphones are almost exactly the same as the old Solo2s. Aside from the new colours, that is – the glossy and matt black versions really stand out. Even the hinges are the same, folding up to a compact size so you can sling them in a bag or the bundled case.

Techspecs

Connectivity Apple W1, Bluetooth, RemoteTalk cable, USB charging
Battery life Up to 40 hours
Weight 215g



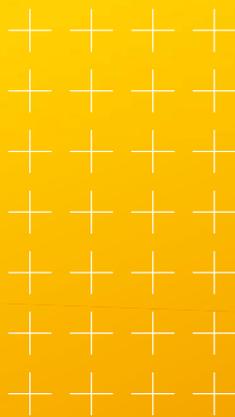
■ We're all ears

With the Beats logo (for playing, pausing and skipping tracks), the circular rim (for volume) and a dedicated power button all within arm's reach, you can leave your phone in your pocket when you're on the go.



■ Apples and pairs

Turn on these headphones near an iPhone 7 and an on-screen prompt appears. Check the name and image match your Beats, hit 'connect' and you're good to go. No messing about in menus or holding down pairing buttons.



STUFF SAYS Fine-sounding Beats with amazing wireless range and battery life ★★★★★☆

Easily the best pair of cans that Beats has ever put out

Pairing with Apple's tech team has made these wireless cans even more of a must-have if you're an iPhone 7 owner. Signal range is pretty much best in class, and battery life is top-notch too. You need to spend R2 500 more to get a pair of noise-cancelling Bose QC35s, which might serve you better on commutes and plane rides; but for everything else, these are a brilliant buy.

EASY



553
PIECES

THE DAY TRIPPER
Yellow Submarine

As The Beatles once sang, all you need is Lego – and psychedelic kits don't come much cooler than this funky tub. Pretend it's 1968 with John, Paul, George and Ringo in mini-figure form, as turning propellers and a swivelling rudder see you rub-a-dub all the way to Pepperland.

R1200 / Ages: 10+



586
PIECES

THE RCKET PAD
City Spaceport Set

Houston, we have Lego: make like Elon Musk and launch a space programme from your living room with this astronomical array of bricks. What this set lacks in boost it makes up for in manpower, with five mini-figures on hand to see your shuttle reach the heights of the upstairs bathroom.

R1340 / Ages: 6-12



773
PIECES

THE KIT CAR
Caterham Seven 620R

The eagerly anticipated result of one Lego fan's imagination, this mini mock-up of the world's favourite build-it-yourself speed machine is a beauty. Like the real thing, the car is made up of branded parts, signature styling and a nifty folding bonnet. But you'll have to provide your own engine noises.

R1450 / Ages: 12+

MEDIUM



1167
PIECES

THE RUG BUG
Volkswagen Beetle

Okay, so it's a little more angular than the curvy original, but this quaintly styled replica of the symbolic VW is straight out of the '60s. Complete with surfboard, cool box and beers – to scale, of course – tricks like a tilting rear seat add extra authenticity to the alluring azure-blue paint job.

R1450 / Ages: 16+



1043
PIECES

THE CHOPPER
Heavy Lift Helicopter

Prepare your best Arnie impression: this beast of a bird can be built two ways, both of them sturdy enough to hold the heaviest plastic load. The rotors are motorised, while a working winch and rudders lend this blocky copter a healthy dose of realism.

R1740 / Ages: 10-16

**UPVOTED
LEGO**

Our brick-loving *Stuff* team picks out nine of the coolest new kits to keep you building into 2017

CHALLENGING



1977
PIECES

THE LOG LIFTER
Claas Xerion 5000

Who doesn't want to build a mean, green farming machine? Lift stuff with its automated crane arm, before rotating the cab for some back-to-front action. With crab steering and a Claas-approved colour scheme, it'll be the envy of farmers everywhere. Flat cap not included.

R2 350 / Ages: 11-16



2996
PIECES

THE SKY CARRIER
The Shield Helicarrier

Fans of *The Shield* will marvel at the majesty of this massive set. With a host of ships and bits bundled in, this is a real Sunday afternoon boredom-beater. Admittedly, the plastic stand slightly spoils the whole floating-in-the-sky thing, but we won't tell if you don't.

R4 700 / Ages: 16+



2704
PIECES

THE TOY RACER
Porsche 911

Don't be put off by this set's brick-like manual – its collectors' book is packed with info about the real-world versions. The Porsche nerdery doesn't end there, with a faithfully recreated dual-clutch gearbox, exclusive tyres and yellow brake callipers. This is a genuine lesson in car building.

R4 500 / Ages: 16+

WHICH TO GET?

1 Don't sweat the Technic

As well as the difficulty, it's worth considering the type of building you want to do. Prefer complex systems of rods and panels to the classic studded bricks? Go for a Technic set.

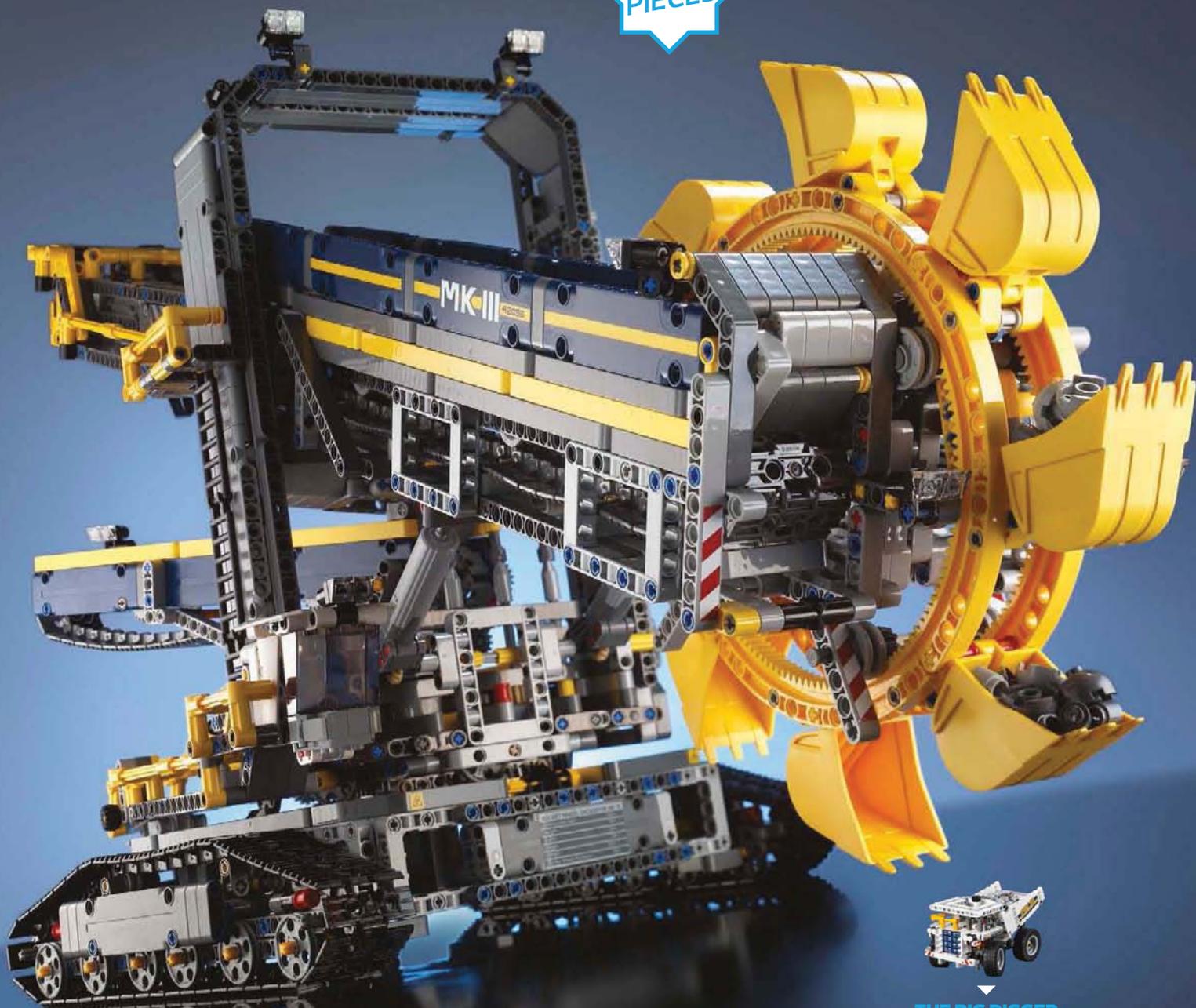


2 Learn to tell the time

Some sets can be built in an hour, while others have brick-counts in the thousands. Build times depend on experience, but good yardsticks can be found in the Lego Shop's user reviews.

[All sets available from shop.kiddiwinks.co.za]

3929
PIECES



THE BIG DIGGER
Bucket Wheel Excavator

Move over, *Minecraft*: standing at 41cm tall, this rock-crunching kit isn't one for the mantelpiece. In fact, it's the biggest Technics set Lego has ever made. Moving conveyors, revolving buckets and joystick controls mean this not-so-gentle giant makes short work of bricky soil.
R3450 / Ages: 12-16



3 Go off-script

Tired of following instructions and fancy making your own creations? Go for sets like the Creator series, which contain versatile bricks and plates that will make a nice base for your collection.

4 Don't bin the box

Play with it all you want, but it pays to keep the packaging: as number-crunchers reported recently, it turns out Lego can hold its value better than gold, stocks or savings.

P R O M O T I O N

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Was R899

NOW R799
INCLUDES FREE DELIVERY IN RSA

PLUS

WeChat's Crazy Cash promotion lets you get up to R399 cash back on your purchase



For help setting up your WeChat Wallet turn to p8



Scan this QR code with **WeChat** to buy the **Altec Lansing Avenue Bluetooth Headphones** right now with **WeChat Wallet**



Altec Lansing Avenue Bluetooth Headphones

These wireless headphones offer Bluetooth 3.0 + EDR (Enhance Data Rate) alongside a built-in microphone and touch control panel, so you need never reach for your phone, tablet or laptop. Get 10 hours on a charge, and if that runs out plug them in and keep listening. And a working range of 10m means you can go about your day without worrying about cables tripping you up.

* Limited to 200 units

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CALL OF DUTY:
INFINITE WARFARE

p76



LOCK & LOAD

WEAPONS READY... WE TEST THE GAMES THAT FOUGHT IT OUT TO BE 2016's NUMBER 1

GAMES MEGATEST

TITANFALL 2



p72

MAFIA III



p73

GEARS OF WAR 4



p74

RISE OF THE
TOMB RAIDER

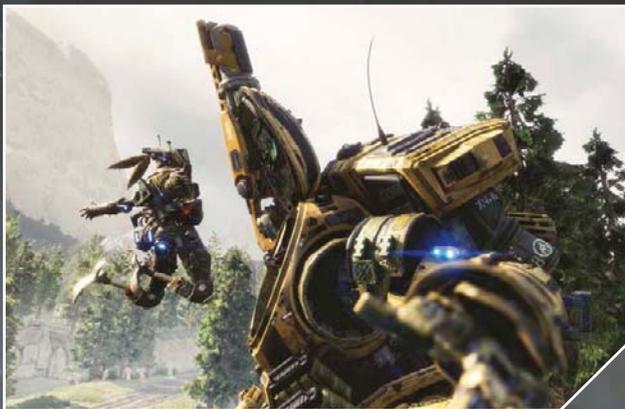


p75

BATTLEFIELD 1



p76



BEST FOR
MECH SUIT
MAYHEM



TITANFALL 2

Titanfall 2's campaign will grab you – but it's the multiplayer that'll keep you hooked

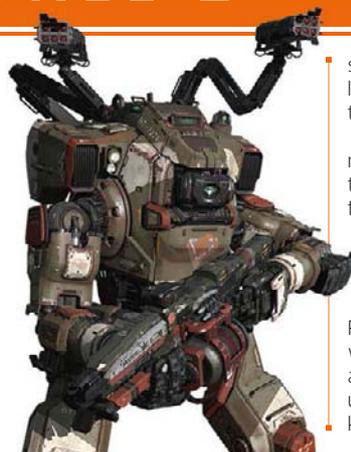
As a nation we hate anything that doesn't have a coat of fur, yet *Titanfall 2* manages to make us care about a giant mechanical soldier-suit.

Titanfall set out its stall in 2014 as an impressive online shooter missing some key components. *Titanfall 2* not only brings everything we felt was missing,

but also delivers in key areas to improve existing mechanics.

The opening act serves as a brief tutorial as to what it means to be a Pilot, and what it takes to keep a Titan running. Which is... well, it's batteries, basically. That and not getting shot.

While piloting a Titan is great fun, the most exciting moments are often on foot as a Pilot. The stringing together of moves is exhilarating: you sprint into a jump that hits a wall; you run along it and bounce off onto another wall; and you keep going,



shooting along the way, before landing into a brutal attack on the last enemy.

There are few games that match on-screen movement to what you're doing with your fingers this well – and it's all done at breakneck speed, running a smooth 60fps, while looking gorgeous.

Ultimately it feels as though Respawn has remembered why we play games: fun, escapism and, occasionally, just to blow up stuff. It's time to suit up, and kick some posterior.

STUFF SAYS Bombastic, ridiculously fast-paced, but surprisingly full of heart ★★★★★



Xbox One, PC, PS4 / titanfall.com

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MULTI-LAYERED MULTIPLAYER



Respawn has taken on the feedback of the player base from the beta tests, and delivered a tight yet deep multiplayer experience. The mixture of Titans, weapons, modes and skills means there's something here for all types of player. With the likes of *Call of Duty* and *Battlefield* you might feel punished if you're not dedicating days of your life to improving your skills and gaining XP, but here you can get involved on any level at any time. *Titanfall 2* never leaves a man behind.

Xbox One, PC, PS4 / mafiagame.com

MAFIA III

Ready to feed some Italian mobsters to the Deep South's hungry gators?

Mafia 3 might have been born on the bayou, but once you've taken in its sights, sounds and society, the gameplay feels a bit like waking up with a horse's head in your bed. Hangar 13's open-world crime sim wants to be the don but just doesn't do enough to carve its place as the new king of crime. It's buggy, and recycles the same overly familiar shooting, stealth and driving mechanics without adding anything new. Despite this, what you will find is a surprisingly deep and political

message underneath. Weren't expecting a commentary on 1960s American racial tensions in between whacking gangsters, were you? Realistically, though, gamers aren't buying open-world crime

sim for social history lessons. It's a power fantasy, one that'll have you running the city by the end. But if that's all you're looking for, *Grand Theft Auto* is still the benchmark, and far less repetitive.



BEST FOR WANNABE CRIMELORDS

STUFF SAYS Repetitive gameplay in a barren world ★★☆☆☆

THE SUMMER OF HATE



Take a short drive around New Bordeaux and you'll quickly experience the injustice and intolerance rife in this fictional version of 1968 New Orleans. It's unavoidable, with ethnic slurs peppering the script like tommy gun bullets, downtrodden factory workers whispering about non-violent protests, and white NPCs calling the police if main character Lincoln Clay wanders into a particularly opulent neighbourhood.

Xbox One, PC /
gearsofwar.com

BEST FOR
MINDLESS
BLOODSHED

GEARS OF WAR 4

The latest GoW nails the series' formula without really moving it forward

Gears of War 4 is a game that knows what it's good for and delivers this with an almighty torrent of bloodshed. It ain't clever, but Xbox One's latest exclusive is big, silly fun.

What makes it so entertaining is that it knows its limits. It doesn't have any highfalutin' ambitions towards added emotional nuance or drastically altered gameplay. Let's be blunt,

the only reason *Gears of War* has a plot is to give you an excuse to blow things up.

From *Uncharted* to *Tomb Raider* and *Shadow of Mordor*, most third-person games try to mix up combat by incorporating an element of stealth into proceedings. Otherwise you'd be running and gunning all the bloody time. Being profoundly dumb at heart, *GoW4* has no time for such nonsense.

While that philosophy does show its age at times and won't be for everyone, we don't care too much for these subtleties when knee deep in a cesspit

of Swarm and jacked full of adrenaline. This is the logic of *Die Hard*, *The Raid* and pretty much any action blockbuster you care to think of, and developer The Coalition does a great job of bringing it to Xbox once more. If *GoW4* is for boneheads, then boneheads we must be. Heavily armed boneheads, that is.



CHAINSAWS NEVER LOOKED SHARPER

Following on from the stunning *Forza Horizon 3*, it's another exclusive that gets the absolute best from the Xbox One S – especially if you're playing with HDR enabled on your TV.

This brings a visceral level of detail to swirling weather effects, while explosions



scream out of your TV with unrivalled brightness and intensity.

Although you'll rarely have a spare

moment to take a breather and admire *GoW4*'s graphical prowess, it truly is impressive.



STUFF SAYS A bloody, fun and adrenaline-pumping Xbox One exclusive ★★★★★☆

RISE OF THE TOMB RAIDER (20-YEAR CELEBRATION)

Lara Croft's 20th birthday celebration is high on adventure, low on tomb-raiding

The phrase 'Optional Challenge Tomb' says a lot about *Rise of the Tomb Raider*. This is what

the game chooses to call its puzzle-driven chambers. Can we still call *Tomb Raider* a game about raiding tombs, when it treats its namesake activity like a side salad?

Rise returns *Tomb Raider* to the architectural opulence of its past, while retaining its modern

vision for explosive action. Our heroine is now throwing herself into the firing line willingly and the result is a central character, and plot, that feels like it's found its way home.

Lara is forever unearthing history's secrets, but only now has the game's developer fully uncovered its own vision for the future of Miss Croft. Action is this game's principal love, and more than ever it sits comfortably on the shelf next to the likes of *Uncharted*.

It might pander to today's trends, but that hasn't stopped Crystal Dynamics from injecting their creation with intelligence and excitement. It's not what hardcore fans wanted, but at some point you have to let go and embrace progress. If you do, *Rise* will undoubtedly provide you with a thrilling adventure and a thoughtful storyline.



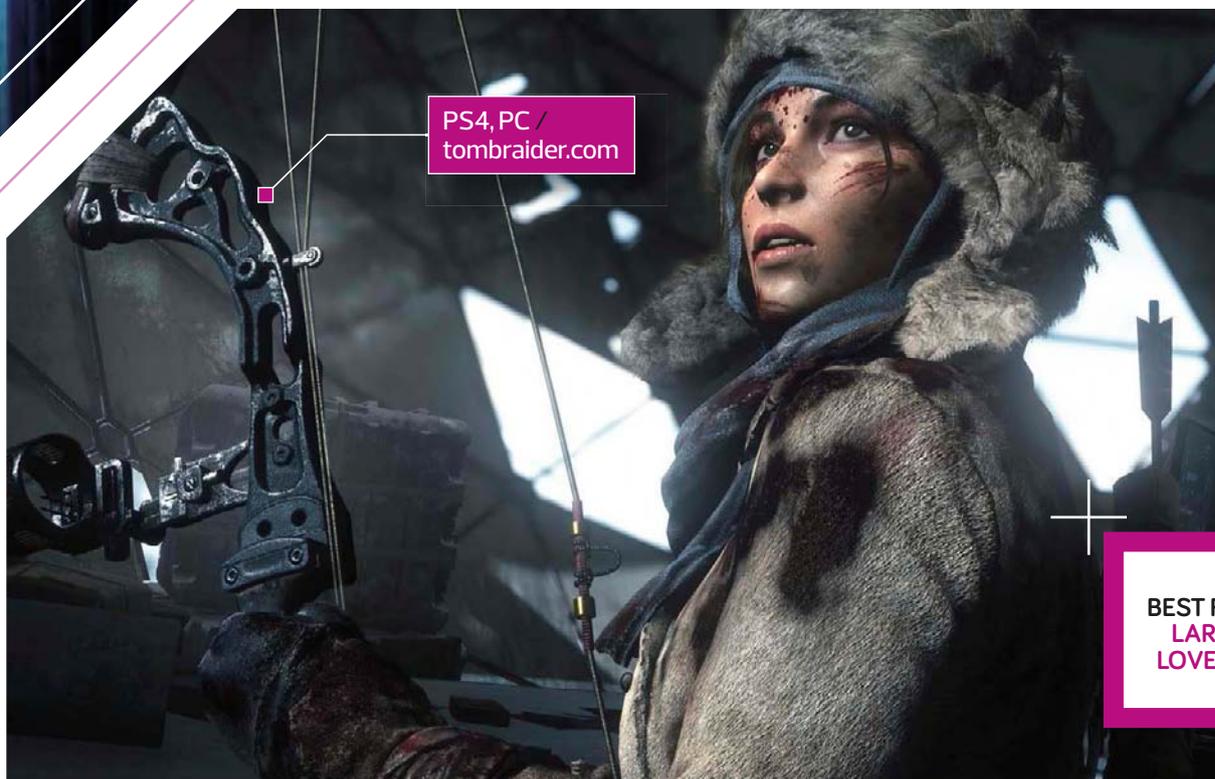
VIRTUAL RAIDER

The downloadable story mission *Blood Ties* sees you wander around Croft Manor uncovering the tumultuous marriage of Lara's parents through forgotten notes and artifacts.

In standard play, you'll do this by uncovering secret passageways and maps. In VR, you'll

have more of a straightforward walk through dusty, mahogany-clad hallways and corridors. While

this content is certainly more immersive in VR, it's still best experienced in bog standard reality.



PS4, PC /
tombraider.com

BEST FOR
LARA
LOVERS

STUFF SAYS A worthy sequel that only hardcore fans may find lacking ★★★★★☆

VS

**CALL OF DUTY:
INFINITE WARFARE**



BATTLEFIELD 1



Ground Control to Major Tom, reload your plasma gun and call your killstreaks in: we're going into orbit

After an opening mission full of explosions, bombast and bluster, the latest *Call of Duty* campaign settles into a familiar 'defend our home from invaders' bullet-fest... only with Kit Harington (Jon Snow himself) hamming it up as main villain Salen Kotch.

**BEST FOR
FRAG-FESTS
IN SPACE**

also jump into a spaceship, of course. Happily, *Infinite Warfare* delivers in space, whether you're bouncing through debris or just enjoying the view from orbit. You will be playing these scenes with your jaw on the floor.

Time to kill

CoD's famous multiplayer chaos returns, but it doesn't feel that different from last year's *Black Ops III*. There are modes galore, plus perks, scorestreaks and gun attachments to unlock. It's more than you could ever use, and remains impenetrable to casual players.

Infinite Warfare is a huge package of shooty goodness. But in a year overflowing with games, it doesn't feel different enough to win over the WWI veteran *Battlefield 1*.

Fly me to the moon

Infinity Ward has shaken things up for this edition. You can pick side-missions now, unlocking bonuses to give you an edge in later levels. Visit the armoury before each excursion and you can tweak your loadout. This is the future, after all – you've got robots to blast as well as human soldiers, so you'll want the gun that's quickest at killing.

It wouldn't be much of a space shooter if you couldn't

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★☆

Still bombastic, still explosive, still *Call of Duty* – it's the Marmite of FPSs

An FPS that puts you on board tanks, trucks, planes and Zeppelins... yet doesn't end up a total mess

**BEST FOR
TRENCH
WARFARE**

As soon as your boots hit the muddy trenches of WWI, there's an overwhelming sense that you're in good hands here. Developer Dice stays respectful of the setting, without ever forgetting that *Battlefield* needs to be entertaining.

Them's fightin' words

Splitting the campaign into smaller War Stories shifts the action across the globe and mixes up the mechanics. From tank-based dramatics and sniper-friendly deserts to flying above the Somme as a renegade pilot battling both the Germans and his conscience – if this is the closest we get to crawling unarmed through a crater-strewn hellscape, then it'll suit us just fine.

Wondering if Dice has flunked the multiplayer? Don't. A lot of

the subtlety that's so carefully crafted in each campaign is unceremoniously dumped as soon as you hit the multiplayer loadout screen, but that's partly out of necessity – a 64-player face-off was always going to dissolve into chaos.

Back to the future

From the start it's clear this game is a feast of pure action. Planes do strafing runs over the scenery, tanks barrel over hills, and squads of soldiers sprint between buildings as shells land all around them. And that's before the scenery-levelling Zeppelins turn up.

It's the idea of conquest that really separates *Battlefield* from *Call of Duty*. Sticking to the past helps, sure; but if you prefer epic scale to epic carnage, this is the shooter for you.

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★★

A World War I shooter that's epic in every respect – the best *Battlefield* yet

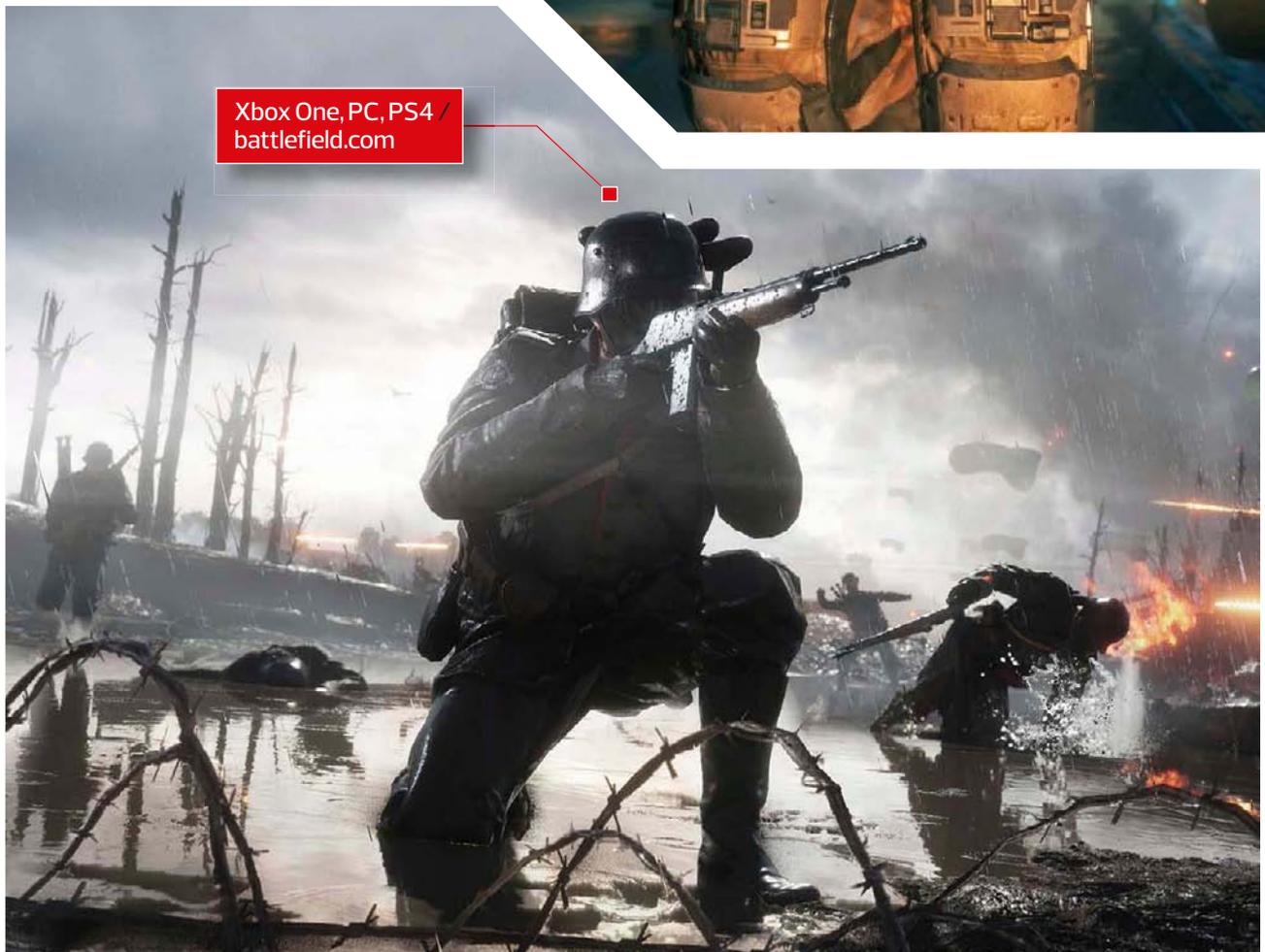


Xbox One, PC, PS4 /
callofduty.com

THAT'S A BIT HOFF THE WALL

This year's *Call of Duty* doesn't send zombies into space – it sends them to the '80s. An '80s theme park, to be precise, to terrorise four teens while DJ Hasselhoff spins the

tunes. No, really. Tongue firmly in cheek, a colourful cartoon introduces an engaging horde mode that'll see you fighting off increasingly hungry waves of the undead.



Xbox One, PC, PS4 /
battlefield.com

Smarter than the average wear

They're both serious wearables for discerning geeks, but which of these feature-packed smartwatches can take on the Apple Watch?

Nixon Mission

What's the story?

There's making a statement, and then there's sticking a bright orange smartwatch on your wrist. Nixon's Mission is big, bright and bulky — there's really no missing it, but then it's hardly your average watch. The Mission is built for extremes.

Everything is made from stainless steel, so it'll withstand a beating — or a wipeout, if you're surgically attached to your surfboard — and the rugged rubber strap is just as tough. It's completely watertight, with a clip protecting the microphone so you can stay hands-free even after you've given it a dunking.

Is it any good?

The 1.39in circular OLED screen is one of the best you'll find on an Android Wear watch. There's no 'flat tyre' gap like you get on a Moto 360, and it's easy enough to read outdoors, even through sunglasses. You shouldn't have any problems seeing your ski stats while you're on the mountain, even if you keep your goggles on.

Battery life isn't the best, though. You could probably squeeze two days of light use between charges, but realistically you'll be plugging in every night. And expect a full charge to drain in three hours when you use GPS — hardly ideal for an all-day outing.

Price R8 000 / nixon.com

Tech 1.39in 400x400 OLED ● Accelerometer, gyroscope, barometer, GPS, thermometer, altimeter, e-compass ● Wi-Fi, Bluetooth ● 400mAh battery ● 48x48x16mm, 101g

Stuff says ★★★★★☆

This is the base-jumping, ski-slalom, wave-riding Android Wear watch of choice

Samsung Gear S3

What's the story?

Forget square screens and clever crowns; the Gear S3 feels like the real deal. It's got a fully round display, smart rotating bezel and circular-centric OS that actually makes sense on your wrist. Tizen might just be the best watch software out there. And yes, that includes Apple's watchOS.

The S3 is bigger than the old S2, but the leather strap and stainless steel finish on this Classic version give it a real touch of class. There's more room inside for a bigger battery, which easily lasts two days on a full charge, along with neat tech like Samsung Pay... once that actually shows up in SA.

Is it any good?

It might not look it, but the Gear S3 Classic is pretty tough. You can't take it swimming, admittedly, but it'll shrug off a rain shower. More importantly, the whole thing feels super-snappy and responsive thanks to a speedy new CPU.

The OLED screen is gorgeous, and really shows off the skills of the Tizen OS — it's really slick, even if the built-in watch faces don't give you loads of information at a glance. This is easily the best smartwatch out there for Android fans, and narrowly slots in behind the Apple Watch when it comes to feature-packed hardware.

Price R6 500 / samsung.com/za

Tech 1.3in 360x360 OLED ● Accelerometer, gyroscope, barometer, GPS, heart-rate ● Wi-Fi, NFC, Bluetooth ● 380mAh battery ● 46x49x12.9mm, 59g

Stuff says ★★★★★

Beats Android Wear at its own game — a few more apps and Samsung has a winner here

THAT'S GOT TO SMART: WAR OF THE SENSORS

● Tricky Nixy

There's no shortage of sensors inside the Nixon — you get an altimeter, thermometer, barometer and compass. There's GPS on board too, but annoyingly no heart-rate sensor. This feels like an oversight — you just won't be getting the full story if you take it running, let alone go skiing with it.

● Super Sammy

With built-in GPS and a heart-rate monitor, there's no excuse not to get fit with a Gear S3 on your wrist. It'll recognise anything more than a gentle walk and record it in Samsung's S Health fitness diary, so you can track your progress over time. It'll also count star jumps, crunches and sit-ups — no button presses required.

1 Surf's app

The Mission app tracks surfing and skiing locations for conditions, so you'll know when it's the perfect time to get out there.

2 Just like all the wrist

Outside of its snow and surf apps, the Mission works pretty much like any other watch running the Android Wear OS.

3 Low on apps

Samsung still doesn't have much in the way of watch apps. It's the one key area where Tizen lags behind Android Wear... for now.

4 High on straps

The Gear S3 Classic rocks a mean leather strap, but the sportier Frontier version has a workout-friendly rubber one instead.



The wonder of View

It's better than Cardboard but way cheaper than the big boys of VR...
Stuff spends a fortnight finding out if Google's new headset is virtually perfect

Rtba / madeby.google.com/vr

● DAY 01

Daydream View is the funky headset that Google hopes will spread VR to the masses. It's thousands of rand cheaper than an Oculus Rift, HTC Vive or PlayStation VR setup, and even undercuts Samsung's Gear VR. But it needs to get more than the price right to impress us...

Strapping Daydream to our face, the first thing we notice is how delightfully snug it feels. Compared to Gear VR's harsh plastics and Cardboard's... well,

cardboard, Daydream View is like having your face hugged by a cloud. The headset is covered in soft fabric, with plush innards. If you wear glasses, you won't even need to take them off – there's plenty of room in there. This is one of the most comfortable VR headsets we've tried.

Setup is as simple as slipping a compatible phone into the headset then closing it up. The elasticated clasp keeps things locked in place, so we're not

worried about sending the Pixel XL flying to the floor.

Once we've downloaded the app from the Play Store, NFC tech inside the headset instantly activates it – no digging around the app drawer required – and then the remote automatically pairs to the phone. It's reassuring to know that, if we get disorientated or the remote doesn't point where we expect, we just have to hold down the home button and it will automatically recentre everything, so we're always facing the right direction.

Daydream's cutesy tutorial does a great job of helping you get to grips with how the remote

works and how to interact with different VR experiences. We could play fetch with that polygonal fox all day.

● DAY 02

After spending most of the day playing golf in the *Wonderglade* theme park, I start to get Wii Sports flashbacks and quickly realise that the bundled remote control is Daydream's secret weapon. This is what elevates it over Cardboard and Gear VR, and makes each experience that bit more immersive.

Think of it like a miniature Wii Remote: it's packed with sensors

Compared to Gear VR's harsh plastics and Cardboard's... well, cardboard, this is like having your face hugged by a cloud



Donut of Truth™

- 01** Fits like a dream and is incredibly comfy
- 02** Clever controller opens up more possibilities
- 03** Provides VR experiences at a real-world price
- 04** Limited app choice and, for the moment, it's only compatible with Google Pixel and Moto Z phones
- 05** Headset lets in quite a bit of light

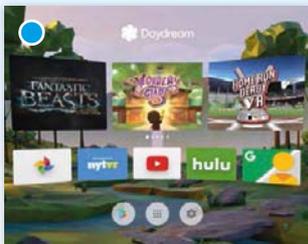
Tech specs

Headset dimensions
167x106x99mm, 220g

Remote controller dimensions
105x35x17mm, 40g

Connectivity
Bluetooth LE, USB-C for charging

Battery life
Up to 12 hours



so you can use it like a motion controller, and has a clickable touchpad for directional control and interaction. Two menu buttons and volume controls complete the set. You'll want to attach the wrist strap included in the box, so you don't accidentally embed it in any furniture or family members' faces while you're in VR, but it's sturdy enough to survive a floor drop.

DAY 07

You can buy and download new apps without leaving VR, which is great, but within a week we've already played through most of the apps and games available at launch. At least Google's own apps are packed with content. You've got YouTube for watching 360° videos, Google Photos for bringing your own 360° panoramas to life, Google Arts & Culture (a digital art gallery filled with historical masterpieces from around the world), and Street View. We're not sure if we'll ever get to visit the real Machu Picchu, but Google's VR version is a pretty good (and cheap) alternative.

DAY 13

It all seems just a tad sharper than anything we've seen on the Gear VR. The Pixel XL's QHD resolution

helps here, but we wish the headset was a bit better at blocking light. There are too many gaps around the bridge of your nose and cheeks, so you're never completely isolated from the non-virtual world. We've had to wait for the sun to set to get the best experience.

Can you use it for hours without feeling as though an *Aliens*-style facehugger has assaulted your face? Not quite. It's light enough, but that soft material stops air from getting to your face. That can leave you a bit hot and bothered after a long session, and you'll probably be glad to return to the open spaces of reality after an hour or so.

DAY 14

Daydream View isn't supposed to challenge the Oculus Rift, HTC Vive or PSVR. It's an inexpensive headset that works with your phone to deliver VR experiences – compromised ones, sure, but then it's running off something that slips into your pocket, not a R30,000+ gaming PC.

With that in mind, Google has mostly managed to get this one right. The headset has a few minor issues, but if the Daydream content store can expand to match Samsung's, Google will have a clear winner on its hands.



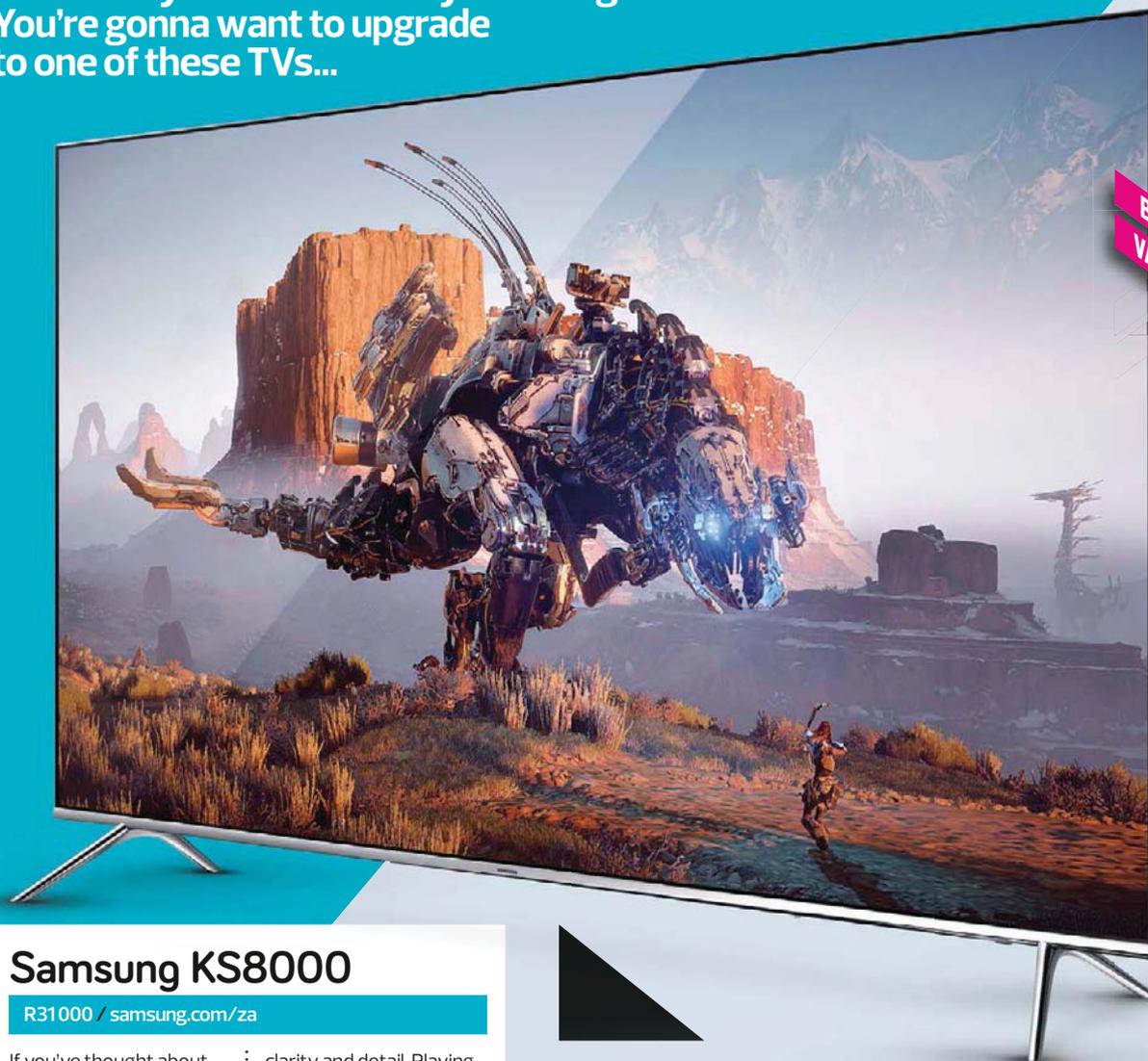
STUFF SAYS

Despite limited app and phone support just now, Google's second stab at VR has serious potential



Pixel blast: The best 4K TVs for gaming

Got a fancy new console in your lounge? You're gonna want to upgrade to one of these TVs...



Samsung KS8000

R31000 / samsung.com/za

If you've thought about getting a 4K TV, then you've no doubt had a look at Samsung's KS8000 series. These TVs are the cheapest you can buy that come with the all-important UHD Premium seal of approval for HDR, 10-bit colour depth and loads more good stuff.

Better still, their picture quality is stuffed full of

clarity and detail. Playing *The Last of Us* on one of these things is absolutely sensational.

More expensive TVs will give you an even better viewing experience but, for the price, it's hard to knock Samsung's entry-level 4K set.

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

Rand for rand, this is an unbeatable 4K TV deal

JARGON BUSTER

HDR

While 4K is your TV's resolution, High Dynamic Range is the contrast it's capable of. Think deep blacks and dazzling whites.

INPUT LAG

The time a TV takes to respond to your console's instructions. The more powerful a set is, the quicker it can update its pixels.

NITS

A measurement of light output, not those pesky hair-crawlers. Most UHD Premium TVs are at least 1000 nits bright.

PANEL BIT DEPTH

You want a 10-bit depth, which means your TV can reproduce 1024 shades for every primary colour.

4K
CONSOLES
RATED
**PlayStation
4 Pro**

Sony's latest machine is the best you can get for 4K gaming. Even though most titles are upscaled, they look fantastic.

★★★★★


Xbox One S

Project Scorpio will upstage it later this year, but the One S is still pretty rad, especially for the HDR-enabled *Gears of War 4*. Plus it has a 4K Blu-ray player.

★★★★★


**Nvidia
Shield TV**

Got a powerful PC but prefer playing games on your TV? The Shield will stream *Fallout 4*, *Overwatch* and the like to your set. But it won't do HDR.

★★★★☆



Skyworth 55G7200

R13 000 / iskyworth.com

Videophiles will tell you that no 4K TV that costs less than R30k is worth a watch, but like audiophiles, their mutterings are best ignored. See, unlike cinephiles who love movies, videophiles love gear, specifications and measurements. And contrast ratios in the abstract are far less interesting than in the actual, like when we're

actually grimacing at Deadpool's horrid mug in glorious 4K. Skyworth's smallest 4Ker has a couple of menu navigation quirks, but nothing for which plenty of ports, built-in Ethernet and Wi-Fi, and decent smart TV smarts can't make amends.

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

Surprisingly good bang for remarkably few bucks



LG OLED65G6V

R100 000 / lg.com/za

Money no object? This is the TV your lifetime's worth of skulduggery deserves. A 65in OLED with the UHD Premium seal of approval, it's an absolute stunner. The glass panel itself is only millimetres thick, while picture quality is mesmerising.

There's a precision on offer here that's rare, even for a 4K HDR TV. Hooking

up a standard PS4 or Xbox One would be doing a disservice – it demands 4K. Turn on Game Mode for a 33ms response time. It's slower than the Samsung on the left, but OLED means minimal motion blur and deep blacks.

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

The TV of your dreams and ours – shame it's so pricey



Hisense 55M7000

R15 000 / hisense.co.za

Like the Skyworth above, Hisense's 55in 4K TV succeeds in not just looking the part of a far more expensive unit, but mostly acting like it, too. Picture quality is very solid for the price, port selection is extensive and the built-in connectivity and support or apps like ShowMax and Netflix out of the box make it an entirely respectable

choice if you're disinclined to spend the price of a secondhand hatchback on your goggle box. An approach we fully endorse considering the change can then be spent on one of those shiny consoles on the left. And the games to play on it.

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

Half the Samsung's price, but not half the quality



LG OLED55E6V

R57 000 / lg.com/za

We love LG's OLED TVs, but they're expensive. Really, really expensive. While this E6 model won't crop up in your local Hospice shop any time soon, it is LG's only UHD Premium TV available for under sixty grand. So sell a kidney and you'll have yourself a sensational gaming setup.

What makes OLED so special? Contrast. There's

no muddiness when dark and bright colours interact. The thought of playing *Resident Evil 7* in 4K and HDR on this thing is enough to give us heart palpitations. Anything lurking in the shadows is guaranteed to have us leaping out of our skin.

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

If you can afford to go OLED, this TV is a treat

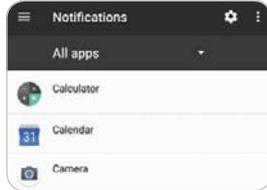
BETA YOURSELF ANDROID NOUGAT

Mmm, chewy, gooey Nougat... *Stuff* reveals how to extract maximum sweetness from Android 7.1, Google's latest and most satisfying mobile operating system

THE BASICS

■ **Catch a cat.** Every version of Android features an Easter Egg game, and 7.1's is a feline version of *Pokémon Go*. Open the 'About Phone' part of Settings then tap repeatedly on the Android Version entry. A few taps then a long tap on the Android N logo will magic-up a virtual plate for leaving treats on.

■ **Embrace folders.** Almost no-one customises their Android handset as much as they should. Take full advantage of Nougat's flexibility by tweaking the five app icons at the bottom of its homescreen. Make a folder for the games you're currently playing by dragging game icons onto each other, then long-press and drag it onto this bar.



■ **Quick-draw your camera.** At least twice a week we miss a picture of a cat posing on a bench because we're fumbling around with our phones. Luckily, Android 7.1 lets you quickly double-tap the power button to launch the camera. You can switch this gesture on and off in Settings > Moves.

■ **Banish annoying app messages.** Notifications are the lifeblood of a phone, but no-one wants to read that Captain Flibble's Gem Farm misses them. Android 7.1 makes it easier than ever to block nuisance apps. Just long-press on any notification

as it arrives and you can make them silent, or block them altogether.

■ **Conjure an instant playlist.** Nougat laughs in the face of the iPhone's 3D Touch gestures, adding the same features without any special hardware. Long-press the Play Music icon, for example, and you can start a random 'I'm Feeling Lucky' playlist with a single tap.

■ **Get help, stat.** Until now, if you had problems with your Android phone you had to pester a geeky friend or wade through forums. But there's now help built into Android 7.1. 'Support' is one of the main tabs in Settings, and it lets you live-chat or call one of Google's geniuses. There's no charge either.

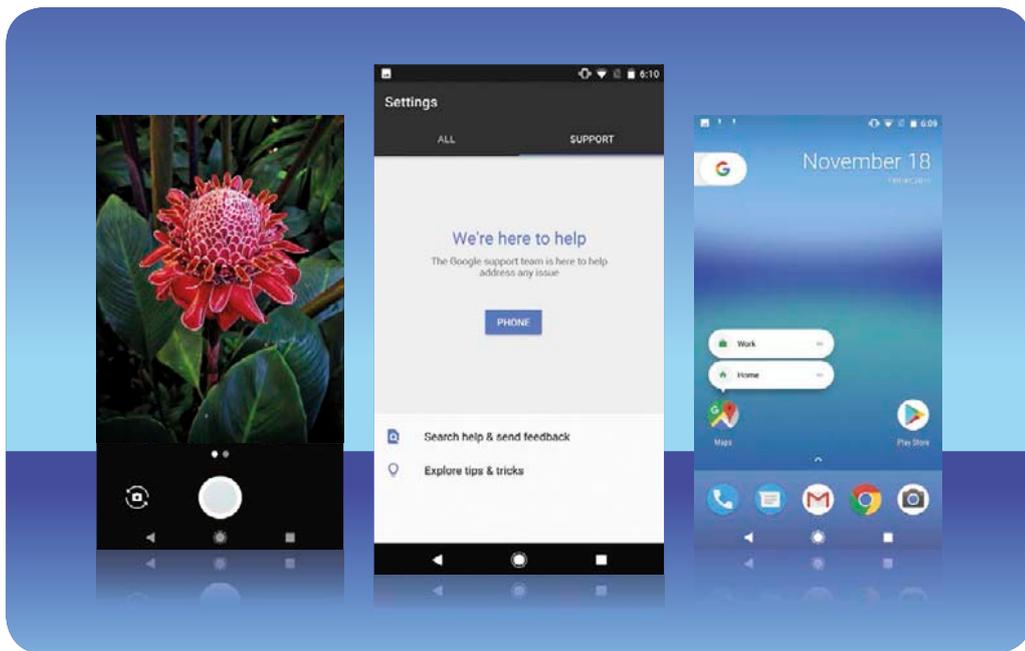


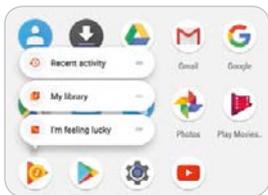
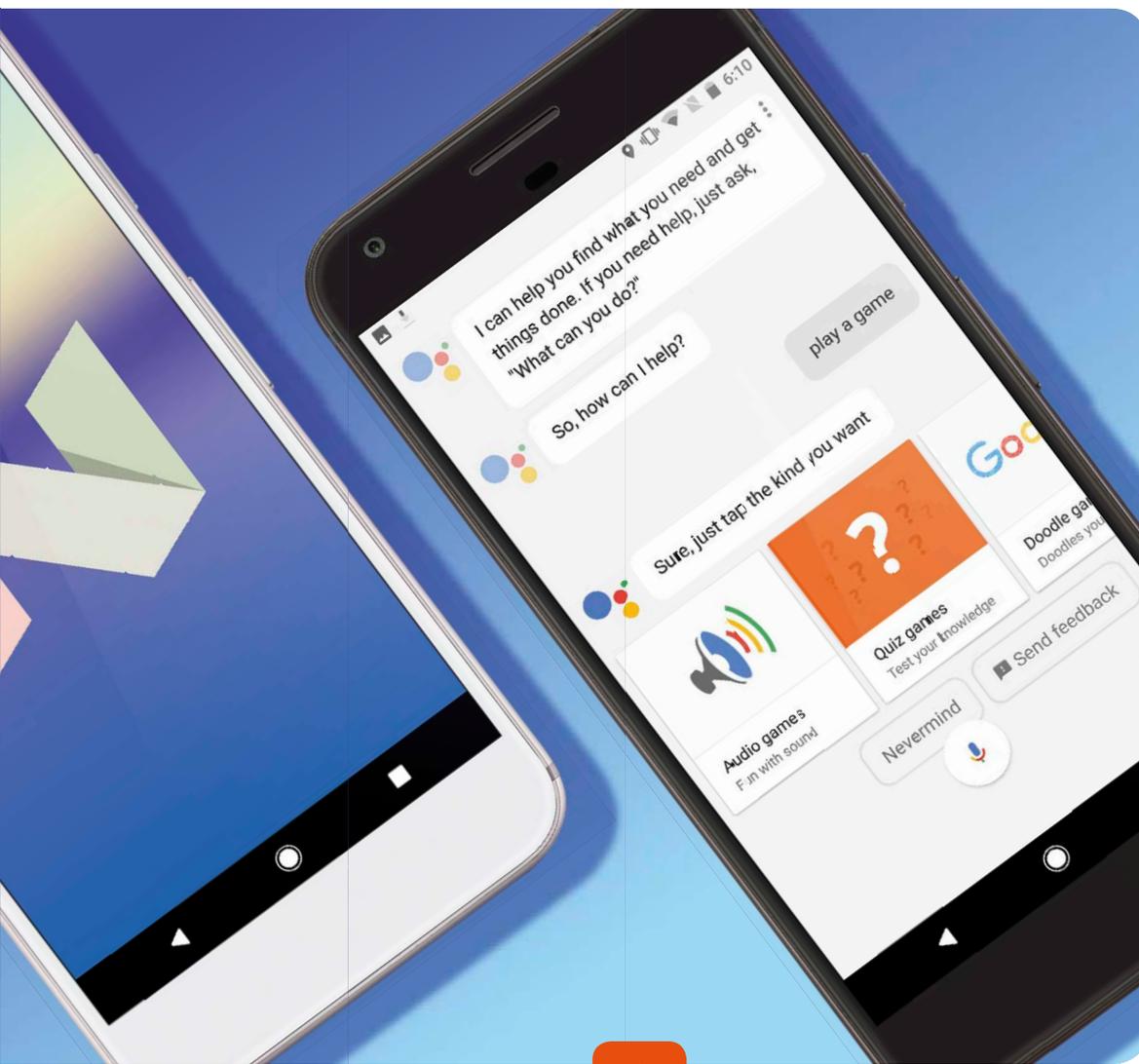
BATTERY BOOSTERS

■ **Avoid a blackout.** Get an emergency battery lifeline at the end of the day by setting Battery Saver mode to click on when your charge hits 5%.

■ **Keep Facebook on a leash.** The Facebook app siphons off juice like it's stockpiling for the apocalypse. Stop it using mobile data when inactive by going to Settings > Apps > Facebook > Data Usage.

■ **Get a 'time of death' report.** Tap the battery icon in the notification drop-down bar to get a graph of how long your phone is going to last.





MULTITASKING

■ **Master notifications.** You can now fire back WhatsApp texts without opening the app. Tap 'Reply' in the message notification.

■ **Double up on apps.** Fire up the first app you want to open, then long-press the square soft key and select a second app to fill the other half of the screen.

■ **Browse two sites at once.** Open an article, then long-press the square soft key. Now tap the three-pip button in the top right of Chrome and select 'Move to Other Window'.



GOOGLE ASSISTANT

■ **What's in a name?** To get Google to call you Magisterium Archibald (or whatever name you feel you deserve), hold down the middle soft key to bring up the Assistant, then tap the three-pip button at the top-right. Now go to Settings, tap your account entry at the top and then Nickname, where you type in your Boaty McBoatface *nom de plume*.

■ **Play a game.** Ask the Assistant to 'play a game' and you'll get options including a cricket quiz, chess, and a few mobile browser games.

■ **Get MTV via Android.** If you're bored, you can get the Google Assistant to play a randomly picked music video on YouTube just by saying "Play a music video". 'Choose your genre' can be a little hit and miss, mind.



FINE TUNING

■ **Scan for notifications.** Swipe the fingerprint scanner to bring down notifications. It's genius, and you can switch it on in Settings > Moves.

■ **Free up space instantly.** Long-press the Photos icon then tap Free Up Space to delete photos that have already been uploaded to Google's cloud.

■ **Change the mood.** Go to Settings > About Phone, then keep tapping the Build Number until the phone says developer options have been unlocked. You'll now find some Animation Scale controls.



LEVEL UP WITH...



GOOGLE DAYDREAM

One of the most exciting bits of Nougat is that it waves in the next generation of mobile VR. Sadly, the Daydream View is only compatible with a few phones, but Google promises more will soon follow.

Rtba / madebygoogle.com/vr



LENS LAUNCHER

If your first reaction to the new Nougat interface is "Good Lord, this is rubbish", swap it out for something else. Our favourite launchers include Evie and Microsoft's Arrow Launcher, but we're also partial to the bizarre Lens Launcher.

Free / play.google.com



CHROMECAST ULTRA

This phone-streaming mini monster can now handle 4K and HDR video. With it you can fling content from your phone to TV, and play your mobile games on the big screen. Who needs a PS4 Pro?

Rtba / takealot.com

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HERE COME THE HOTSTEPPERS

Few fashion sectors involve as much tech as footwear does, and whether you walk, run, skate or dance, you're probably going to do it better in the right shoes. From the fashionable to the practical, here are the kicks you should be considering.



Vans SK8-Hi
R1200 / vans.com



Under Armour
Charged Bandit 2
R1500 / underarmour.com

Nike Sock Dart
R1900 / shelflife.co.za



Puma Bog
Limitless Evoknit
R3500 / pumaselect.co.za





Le Coq Sportif 'Port Royale'
R2100 / lecoqsportif.co.za



New Balance
MRL247TA Lux Pack Tan
R2600 / shelflife.co.za

[Photographer: Karl Rogers Stylist: Gary Cotterell]

Adidas EQT Support ADV
R2 200 / adidas.co.za



GADGET DOCTOR



ALWAYS ON CALL

facebook.com/stuffsa • @StuffSA
stuff@stuff.co.za

MAIL OF THE MONTH

Q A LACK OF CHOICE
I'm so excited to get my copy of *Stuff* every month, and it certainly is a good read, but I've noticed that you review handsets like the new Google Pixel and the HTC 10 that I know we won't get in South Africa. This is sad, as no matter which carrier in SA you try they only stock five or so makes like: Apple, Samsung, Sony, their own in-house brand, Huawei, or LG. The above are about all that we can get on contract. I'm not saying

that we can't get from Orange, for example, but this means I have to pay cash for the phone. I really wish I was in the USA/UK as they are free to choose. If I'm paying so much for a phone every month there should be a better choice, don't you think?

Strydom

A We couldn't agree more – we'd love to see South African operators carrying the OnePlus devices or the Google Pixel. But

what tends to happen is they sign convoluted contracts with handset manufacturers and have a very vested interest in promoting those devices. Nonetheless, we cover things like the Pixel phones because we believe our audience still wants to know about them, and sometimes (as in the case of the OnePlus) they show up on Takealot or elsewhere online (sadly the Orange store is no more). But, as you say, that usually means having to pay cash.



Speak your brains to *Stuff* and you could win! This letter wins a Thule Stravan Deluxe laptop bag worth R1799.

Q FISHING FOR THE POWERSTREAM
I acquired two World Panel solar panels during the last two weeks or so. I use an Apple iPhone, and an Apple iPad Air. When I opened the bubble pack, I noted that the user instructions on the back of the product card state the following: "Apple iPhone users must connect via PowerStream battery". I have made extensive enquiries in Pietermaritzburg, and have visited many shops such as Outdoor Warehouse, Sportsmans Warehouse, Cape Union Mart, Safari centre, but no one can supply me with this PowerStream battery, and no one can tell me where to get it. No

one seems to know anything about it. There is no warning or indication on the front of the bubblepack that this special battery is required for iPhone/iPad use. It has been suggested that I should contact you. Please let me know urgently where I can obtain such a battery, as without the battery the units are of no use to me.

John

A According to Atmosphere Communications, the company handling Sunstream World Panel's PR in South Africa, you should be able to get the battery at Builders Warehouse outlets or select MTN stores.

Q KNOW WHAT YOU WANT
I am looking to buy a tablet. I am mainly going to use it for gaming, video editing, uploading and watching YouTube. What should I get and where can I get it?
Johan

A If you want to do video editing you're going to need something high-end. None of the budget or midrange tablets have the RAM to handle video, especially not multiple streams of it. We know a couple of folks who edit video on their iPads using iMovie. For this they use either an iPad Air 2 or iPad Pro. We don't know anyone

who edits video on an Android tablet, but that's not to say you can't do it – the challenge is going to be finding an app that's good enough for your purposes. Which brings us to our MS Surface suggestion. The benefit there is that you can run full-blown Windows apps on the Surface, which means professional-grade editing software like Premiere Pro. The problem, however, is the price. The Surface tablets are even more expensive than the iPads. TL;DR version: We'd recommend the best iPad you can buy. And an adaptor to let you dump video straight from an SD card to the device.

Congratulations to our Nikon D3300 bundle winner: Danovin van Rooyen



WIN Next month's mail of the month wins a Thule Gauntlet 3 MacBook Pro Sleeve worth R799

This sleek yet rugged sleeve offers superior edge protection to ensure your MacBook is safe guarded from bumps and scratches

Stuff

TOP TEN

OF EVERYTHING

This gadget has leapt straight outta testing and into our rankings.

NEW

HOT BUY

BARGAIN BUY

UPDATE

Time changes everything, including *Stuff* Top Ten placings.

Searing with techy genius, a product that's set our hearts aflame.

A solid gold bargain. Worth owning, regardless of cashflow.



HOW TO USE THEM

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1

HOT BUY

Samsung Galaxy S7

from R13 000 / samsung.com/za

Welcome to the age of 'sensible Samsung', a smartphone maker of dependable excellence. The Galaxy S7 is straight up brilliant, setting a high bar for all of Samsung's competitors. It looks almost identical to 2015's Galaxy S6 (except the camera bump has been trimmed), but it has a better camera, and has brought back the S5's water-resistance and microSD card slot. Plus, it's got an always-on display and a whopping 4GB of RAM. We're smitten.

Stuff says ★★★★★
An imperious update of our favourite phone from camp Android



● NOW ADD THIS
UAG Composite Case
Want to toughen up your precious Samsung smartphone? Might as well make it look the part too.
R500 / takealot.com

● **TIPS & TRICKS**

- Head to Settings -> Display and you can choose what the Always On display will show. Handy, but you're restricted to Samsung's apps.
- Meaty fingers? Hit Settings -> Language and Input -> Samsung Keyboard and you'll be given the option to make it bigger.
- A trip to Camera Settings will give you the option of controlling your S7 with gestures or even your voice.

● Prices quoted are for handset only unless otherwise stated

2



Apple iPhone 7

from R13 000 / myistore.co.za

The iPhone 7's modest upgrades all come together to make a much more significant whole than you'd expect – in typical Apple fashion, the experience is just so polished. Losing the 3.5mm jack stings, though... and you don't get the 7 Plus's extra camera.

Stuff says ★★★★★
Now is the perfect time to grab Apple's latest and greatest

3



OnePlus 3

R11 000 / takealot.com

You might recall this handset from our September 2016 issue as the Best Phone in the World. We stand by that, but if you want one you'll have to pay for it in full upfront and get it from Takealot. No contracts here, but maybe that's a good thing. Prepaid will cost you less.

Stuff says ★★★★★
If you don't mind paying upfront you'll love it

4



Motorola Moto Z

★★★★★ from R13 000 / lenovo.co.za
Flagship appeal, a slim body and a fancy screen. But the mods don't make up for the shortcomings.

5



Sony XZ

★★★★★ from R13 000 / sonymobile.com/za
Solid build and Sony's style make this a winner, but the 23MP camera isn't as good as it should be.

6



LG G5

★★★★★ from R10 500 / lg.com/za
LG's modular effort is great on paper and not bad in practice. Just keep it away from water and steam.

7



Apple iPhone SE

★★★★★ from R8 500 / myistore.co.za
Cheap, in Apple terms, isn't terrible. It's a 6s in a 5s frame, so it's made for those longing for the old days.

8



Huawei P9

★★★★☆ R8 900 / huawei.com/za
The phone that made it to market with twin shooters first, the P9 will give you lovely monochrome snaps.

9



Xiaomi Mi 5

★★★★☆ R8 000 / miaafrica.com
Looks like a Galaxy S – something, and it costs about four grand less. Specs justify the price of admission.

BARGAIN BUY

10



Vodafone Smart Prime 7

★★★★☆ R1 800 / vodacom.co.za
Good looks, good specs, and a price that won't make your wallet hide in a corner. What more do you want?

1

HOT
BUY

Apple iPhone 7 Plus

from R15 500 / myistore.co.za

The new 7 and 7 Plus look almost identical to their predecessors, except for the glossy jet black option and Lightning headphone output. But they're waterproof, processing power and battery life have been improved, and the Plus gets a tasty dual-lens camera. If you're looking for the top iPhone available today, the 256GB Jet Black 7 Plus is your winner but be prepared to pay notebook prices for it.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Apple's iPhone 7 Plus is their best device yet, leaving us wondering how they're going to improve it come September 2017



● **NOW ADD THIS** **Speck Presidio**

Wrap your pricey iPhone 7 Plus in a clear Speck Presidio cover to increase its likelihood of impact survival, while still being able to see its glorious design. R500 / myistore.co.za

TIPS & TRICKS

- Change up your haptics by going to Settings -> General -> Home Button and selecting the response that feels right.
- Lock the 7 Plus camera lenses down by going to Settings -> Photos & Camera -> Record Video. Presto - no more oopsies.
- Something gone wrong? As unlikely as that is, hold down the power (right) and volume down (left) buttons at the same time to force a restart.



2



Samsung Galaxy S7 Edge
from R15 000 / samsung.com/za

Previously the Edge+ devices were Samsung's non-Note phablets, but now the S7 is the regular-sized device and the S7 Edge the more, well, voluptuous. So, while this here's a great smartphone (like the S7 on the left), it's also an outstanding phablet. Show-off.

Stuff says ★★★★★

We're not convinced we need the curved edges, but they are pretty

3



Samsung Galaxy Note 5
from R13 000 / samsung.com/za

Time to address the elephant in the room. Yes, Samsung's Galaxy Note 7 has had an explosive interlude and we're never going to own one. Samsung is as unhappy about that as we are but that also means that Samsung's Note 5, has just become the phablet to own. Again.

Stuff says ★★★★★

It was gone from the list but not from our hearts. It's back now

4



Xiaomi Mi Max

★★★★★ R4 700 / mia.africa.com

A 6.4in FHD display, 4850mAh battery and 3GB of RAM for under R5k. Umm, yes please.

5



Huawei Mate 8

★★★★★ R13 000 / huawei.com/za

This phone with a 6in display, octa-core CPU and battery that won't quit loves giant hands.

6



Sony Xperia Z5 Premium

★★★★★ R13 000 / sonymobile.com/za

You know what this phone needs? A 4K screen... said no-one ever but Sony went and made one.

7



Microsoft Lumia 950XL

★★★★★ from R11 900 / za.microsoftstore.com

The last oversized Lumia you'll ever own. Microsoft isn't going to be making any more.

BARGAIN
BUY

8



Xiaomi Redmi Note 3

★★★★★ from R3 800 / mia.africa.com

From the other Note lineup comes the Redmi Note 3, with low prices and good specs.

9



LG V20

★★★★☆ from R13 000 / lg.com/za

Great on paper, but the plastic build, low-res wide-angle cam and second screen all flop.

BARGAIN
BUY

10



Xiaomi Redmi Note 2

★★★★☆ from R3 000 / mia.africa.com

The toughest part about choosing the Redmi Note 2 over the Redmi Note 3 is the pricing.



1

HOT BUY

Apple iPad Pro 9.7

from R10 000 / myistore.co.za

The iPad Pro 9.7 takes everything we loved about Apple's original 12.9in Pro tablet, makes it a lot more portable, and even adds in a few extras of its own. The 9.7in Pro ships with Apple Pen support, just like its older bigger brother. The True Tone display, which changes automatically based on ambient light conditions, is a marvel, while the 12MP shooter is frankly overkill for those brave enough to use it in public. It's expensive, but perfection usually comes at a price.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Incredible power, superb features and near-flawless design: the iPad Pro 9.7 is pure tablet perfection



1

HOT BUY

AKG K451

R1 200 / takealot.com

They've actually been around a little while now, but what put the K451 on-ears back on to our radar was an official price drop, and a real-world price of just R1200. For that money they're unbeatable – awesomely agile and punchy sound wrapped up in a subtly stylish and foldable design. Add both standard and three-button control cables for maximising compatibility and there's practically no excuse for not getting brilliant sound from your phone.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Fantastic sound and great portability at an almost unbeatable price. Your phone deserves these.

2



Apple iPad Mini 4

from R6 500 / myistore.co.za

This is the mini tab we've been waiting for. It's 1.4mm thinner and 32g lighter, just the right size for a great portable entertainment hub, and subtle display tweaks will do justice to games and graphic novels alike.

Stuff says ★★★★★

The best small tablet you can buy right now

2



AKG Y50BT

from R2 700 / incredible.co.za

Proof that good wireless sound doesn't have to cost the earth: with none of the horrid hiss, whine, crack and pop that's often a glitch of Bluetooth cans, these serve up detail, with a full charge promising 20 hours.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Just the thing for your iPhone 7

3



Samsung Galaxy Tab S2 9.7

from R9 000 / samsung.com/za

Slimmer and faster, with a brilliant screen and serious stamina, the Tab S2 sees Samsung in the running for the Android throne. Apple's iPads still offer the best UI and app selection, but as Android tabs go, this one's tops.

Stuff says ★★★★★

The best Android slate you're going to find

3



Bowers & Wilkins P5 Wireless

R8 000 / takealot.com

The brand's first foray into wireless brings luxury for your ears inside and out: these are the Aston Martin DB10s of wire-free cans. If you like your sound authoritative, dynamic and subtle, you'll feel right at home.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Luxury for your ears, inside and out

4



Microsoft Surface Pro 3

★★★★★ from R18 000 / microsoft.com/za

Technically this one is a hybrid but we can forgive a lot for this power and versatility.

4



SoundMagic E10S

★★★★★ R540 / sound-magic.co.za

Small, affordable, with a sound that belies their teeny tiny little price. You need these.

5



Apple iPad Pro 12.9

★★★★★ R15 000 / myistore.co.za

The other Pro, this one is fuller featured and larger. But... still not quite a laptop surrogate.

5



Bose QuietComfort 35

★★★★★ R8 000 / dionwired.co.za

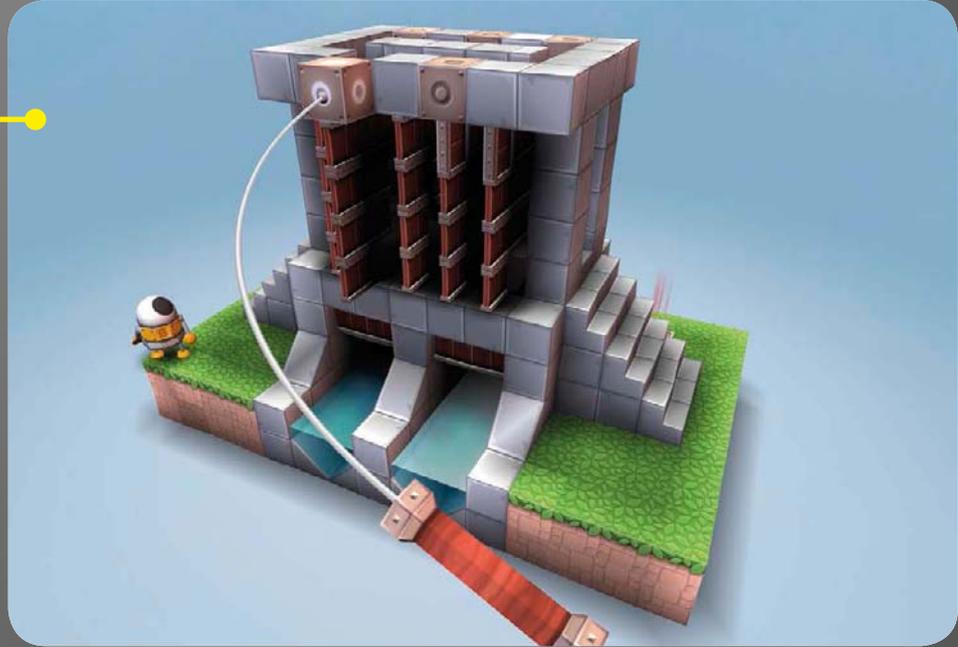
Active noise cancelling. Planes? No problem. People? Perish the thought. Just your tunes.

PLAYLIST GOOGLE DAYDREAM

The Daydream View goggles (see review, p80) are like a pair of cosy slippers for your face, only much more entertaining. Here's what to do with them...

BEST BUY FOR CUTESY PUZZLES

Mekorama VR
Take a dash of *Monument Valley*, add a cute little robot, season with VR magic, and you've got yourself this adorable little brain puzzler. It sees you rotate levels and manipulate obstacles to lead a little mechanical fellow along a journey of exploration.
R54



Twilight Pioneers
Magic. Swords. Dragon souls. Nope, this isn't *Skyrim*, but it's as close as you'll get in mobile VR, for now at least. *Twilight Pioneers* uses a combination of the trackpad and your head movements to create a freedom that's lacking in other Daydream games.
Free



The Arcslinger
Blasting bad guys with a magical six-shooter is a great way to relieve stress while living out your childhood cowboy dreams. You can't move around, so don't expect any *CoD*-like frantic action, but the controller is surprisingly accurate.
R70



Fantastic Beasts
You might not know the difference between a hippogriff and a thestral, but that doesn't mean you won't appreciate waving around a magic wand in this *Harry Potter* outing. You'll see everything before 20 minutes is up, but the visuals are superb.
Free



Hunters Gate
We spent more time marvelling at the beautiful level design in *Hunters Gate* than playing the actual game, thanks to a third-person view that makes it feel like you're towering over a huge *Warhammer* tabletop game. That alone makes it well worth a play.
R81



Keep Talking and Nobody Explodes
This aptly-named party game offers multiplayer gaming through one headset. How? The headset wearer is presented with a randomly generated explosive device, while everyone else has the instructions for defusing it.
R135

NOW WATCH THESE



INVASION!
This Pixar-esque adventure is full of adorable bunnies (of which you are one) and a pair of rather mean and hapless aliens.

ROSE
This short story about a little humanoid on a tiny planet is beautiful, and lets you rotate the world to enjoy events from different perspectives.

YOUTUBE VR
This app does pretty much what you'd expect it to do: namely, it serves up all of YouTube's growing 360° content in one place.

TIPS & TRICKS

Torn between *Game of Thrones* and *Mr Robot* (you pirate you)? WebOS 3.0 lets you split your screen across two channels.

Want to watch Netflix in 4K? You'll have to opt for its most costly Ultra HD package.



1

HOT BUY**LG 55EG960V**R48 000 / lg.com/za

We knew that one day OLED and 4K would be joined in holy matrimony, and that the results would be rather special. That day is now upon us and 'special' doesn't quite do it justice. This 55in/139cm LG is the new pinnacle of TV tech and performance, combining the unbelievable colours, contrast and brightness of OLED with the super-sharp, ultra-detailed images of 4K to create a picture that's more real and enticing than looking out of the window.

Stuff says ★★★★★

It's mighty pricey, but if you're after the finest flatscreen known to man, this is it

● **NOW ADD THIS Microsoft Xbox One S**

A fine games console and a 4K Blu-ray player all in one. Grab yourself a copy of *Forza Horizon 3* and you'll see how much difference HDR makes to gaming. [Rtba / xbox.com/za](http://Rtba/xbox.com/za)

2

NEW**Samsung KS8000**R31 000 / samsung.com/za

The KS8000 series TVs are the cheapest Samsung sets you can buy that come with the all-important UHD Premium seal of approval for HDR, 10-bit colour depth and loads more good stuff. Only available in the 60in version, but bigger is better, right?

Stuff says ★★★★★

A brilliant TV that's future-proof enough to justify the price tag

3

**LG 55EC930T**from R25 000 / lg.com/za

Not everybody's got R50k to blow on a flatscreen, and if you have to choose between OLED and 4K it's OLED we'd take right now. The awesome colours, super-deep blacks and amazing contrast will make everything you already watch look extra amazing.

Stuff says ★★★★★

It's not 4K but it's not priced like one, either

4

**Samsung UA48J6300**★★★★★ R12 000 / samsung.com/za

Performance is stunning and the colours have the right balance of vividness and subtlety.

5

**Samsung UA55JS7200K**★★★★★ R23 000 / samsung.com/za

Smart TVs should all be this good. You'll want it in 4K but it'll do well if you're only running 1080p.

6

**Samsung UA55JS8000**★★★★★ R31 000 / samsung.com/za

Powerful sound, eye-popping colours, and more pixels than we can count. Worth the price? Yes.

7

**LG 65UF650T**★★★★★ R32 600 / lg.com/za

Last year's award winner still has what it takes to turn heads in the direction of its 4K screen.

8

**Hisense 55M7000**★★★★☆ R15 000 / hisense.co.za

Who'd think R15k would net you a 4K, 55in TV for your home? Hisense, that's who.

9

**NEW BARGAIN BUY****Skyworth 55G7200**★★★★☆ R13 000 / iskyworth.com

A 55in 4K display for under R15k? For that combo, we'll forgive the user interface missteps.

10

**Samsung 65JU6600**★★★★☆ R30 000 / samsung.com/za

Once our top TV, this 6-Series still finds a place on the Top 10. Even if it has been supplanted.

YOUR STREAMING ESSENTIALS

Don't waste your free time on TV that'll send you to sleep quicker than a mug of hot chloroform – here's the best on-demand entertainment

NETFLIX



Archer

James Bond might be the more famous secret agent, but Archer Sterling is by far our favourite. From accidentally shooting his co-workers to his daft catchphrases, *Archer* will have you laughing non-stop.



Luke Cage

If Luke could have his way he'd continue working two jobs and living a quiet life, but with superhuman strength comes, well, a whole lot of noise. The soundtrack's pretty badass, too.



A Series of Unfortunate Events

The most unfortunate events in life include the milk going lumpy and being caught by a family member returning their Christmas gifts. Watching Neil Patrick Harris play a crazy evil uncle isn't really unfortunate at all.

AMAZON PRIME VIDEO



The Man in the High Castle

Imagine if Hitler won the war. We'd all be saying *schmetterling* instead of butterfly. Horrific, right? This dystopian series explores some of the even worse things about a world where the Nazis are in charge.



Looper

Most time-travel films says it's a bad idea to visit yourself in the past. This is especially true for Joseph Gordon-Levitt, who's contracted to kill his older self, portrayed by Bruce Willis. Talk about shooting yourself in the foot.



Nightcrawler

This thriller stars Jake Gyllenhaal and focuses on the dark side of journalism. He blackmails colleagues, tampers video footage and puts people in life-threatening danger. And no, he doesn't work for *Stuff*.

SHOWMAX



Death Race

While Jason Statham can act, he's also great in a dumb-as-rocks where vehicles and drivers blow up on a rigged track. There's a story in there somewhere but you're going to slog through it till the next pyrotechnic.



The Flash

DC might be taking a pounding at the box office but *The Flash* deserves your attention. Barry Allen, CSI investigator and super-sonic human, interacts with characters like Green Arrow, Supergirl, and all the bad guys you can eat.



Scorpion

Based on a real person in the same sense that Batman could exist if you shoot enough orphans outside opera houses. Good for a laugh. Watch it with an actual IT expert and watch their blood pressure climb.

TIPS & TRICKS

Siri on MacOS Sierra allows you to search for photos on the web and your laptop, then drag them into apps.

Save on space by getting your Mac to optimise its storage. This will reduce the clutter from big files.



1

HOT BUY

Apple MacBook Pro

from R27 500 / myistore.co.za

It can be easy to focus on what this entry-level version of the 2016 MacBook Pro doesn't have: it's missing that sexy new Touch Bar for a start, and is down on ports and power compared to the next model up. But it's also R5 200 cheaper, and has the same diminutive form and truly gorgeous screen. It also has the brilliant second-gen butterfly keyboard. In fact, you're better off sparing your wallet and forgetting about the Touch Bar. It's just not worth the extra cash.

Stuff says ★★★★★

The Touch Bar version is the lust object, but this 'basic' Pro hits a very sweet spot

**● NOW ADD THIS****Satechi Type-C USB 3 Hub**

Two ports not enough? This hub adds loads more and sits snugly against the new MacBook Pro.

R570 (import) / satechi.net

2

HOT BUY

**Dell XPS 13**

from R20 000 / dell.co.za

The original XPS 13 was already a great lightweight laptop, but now Dell has given it a Windows 10 refresh. If the last one was the thinking person's ultrabook, this is that and a whole lot more. With improved battery life and performance, it's hard to beat.

Stuff says ★★★★★

An excellent Windows 10 Ultrabook, small in size but big on specs

3

**MSI GT72VR 6QE**

from R48 000 / evetech.co.za

Get your game on with MSI's GT72VR, a humongous VR-ready gaming notebook totting Nvidia's new Pascal GTX 1070 8GB GPU, 16GB of RAM and a Core i7-6700 HQ. Whether you're using the 17.3in display or a headset, you're totally sorted.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Get ready for the VR revolution with this desktop-spec gaming notebook

4

**Acer Predator 17**

★★★★★ from R34 000 / acer.co.za

As far as gaming goes, the Predator 17 is fairly cheap for what you get. Look for a refresh soon.

5

**Apple MacBook**

★★★★★ from R18 000 / myistore.co.za

Aside from an extra hour's battery life, the 2016 MacBook isn't that different to the previous one.

6

**HP Spectre 13**

★★★★★ R30 000 / hp.com/za

The world's thinnest notebook? Maybe. Did they leave any bits out? That's a huge 'no'.

7

**Microsoft Surface Book**

★★★★★ from R38 000 / za.microsoftstore.com

A Microsoft notebook, at long last, and the ensuing hardware is pretty darned impressive.

BARGAIN BUY

8

**ASUS ROG GL752VW**

★★★★☆ from R30 000 / asus.com/za

Gaming in the mid-range, with plenty of power in the CPU. We're waiting on Pascal now.

9

**Apple MacBook Air 13in**

★★★★☆ from R17 000 / myistore.co.za

If a portable road warrior is what you're after, this slinky MacBook remains a great choice.

10

**HP Pavilion 15**

★★★★☆ from R25 000 / hp.com/za

Plain covers conceal the fact that this boring-looking machine hides some gaming skillz.

1

HOT BUY



Apple Watch Series 2

from R6 900 / myistore.co.za

The original Apple Watch was the best smartwatch on the market when it launched, but it lacked focus. The Series 2 devices come with an array of upgrades – more power, a brighter screen – along with a greater emphasis on fitness functions without a phone in tow. Both GPS and waterproofing make this a far more compelling gadget for exercise fanatics. No alternative is as fast or as well made, or has the same quality and quantity of bespoke apps.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Apple's small tweaks and renewed sports focus add up to make the Series 2 a watershed wearable

1

HOT BUY



Garmin Fenix 3 HR

from R12 000 / garmin.co.za

The Fenix 3 HR is the smartest watch you can buy. It adds the HR tracking missing on the regular Fenix 3, it'll work with Android or iOS, track every sweaty activity from skiing to SUPing, includes GPS, and lasts up to a week on a charge. It'll track steps and sleep, too, but it's a bit big for bedtime. If you have to be informed of stats and figures you didn't know your body possessed then the Garmin Fenix 3 HR is the only device you want to take on your sea-air-land expeditions.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Serious about your fitness? There's no better wearable for your well-toned arm appendage

NEW

2



Samsung Gear S3

R6 500 / samsung.com/za

Samsung's Tizen OS combined with the rotating bezel is the stuff smartwatch dreams are made of. It's a real rival for Android Wear... now Samsung just needs to get devs as excited about Tizen as we are.

Stuff says ★★★★★

A few more apps and it may be unbeatable

2



Garmin Vivoactive HR

R5 600 / garmin.co.za

Garmin has a frankly bewildering array of fitness trackers and outdoorsy GPS watches, but the Vivoactive HR is the one you really want. It's packed with long-lasting, easy-to-use rewarding fitness cleverness.

Stuff says ★★★★★

All-round tracker with sensors and stamina

3



Fitbit Blaze

R4 000 / fitbit.co.za

Almost as much a fitness tracker as it is a smartwatch, the Blaze delivers accurate heart-rate tracking, multi-sport modes and a lovely interface – even if its design won't appeal to everyone.

Stuff says ★★★★★☆

The Blaze is built to be a great workout buddy

3



Fitbit Charge HR

from R2 700 / fitbit.co.za

The Alta is simple, the Surge is bulky and the Blaze more than most people need. Which is why Fitbit's Charge HR remains our favourite tracker. A built-in HR monitor, pedometer, altimeter and it tells the time? Perfect.

Stuff says ★★★★★☆

A basic fitness friend but it's all most will need

NEW

4



Nixon Mission

★★★★☆ R8 000 / nixon.com

This is the base-jumping, ski-slalom, wave-riding Android Wear watch of choice.

4



Moov Now

★★★★☆ R1 200 / quantifi.co.za

Not just a tracker but a trainer, offering guided workouts with voice coaching.

5



Garmin Vivomove

★★★★☆ R3 000 / garmin.co.za

Free up a space on your wrist – this is everything you need from a fitness watch.

BARGAIN BUY

5



Misfit Flash

★★★★☆ R550 / quantifi.co.za

The Flash may be cheap, but it's still good enough for Discovery Vitality. Win!

1

HOT
BUY

Xbox One S

Rtba / xbox.com/za

The Xbox One S dumps all the stuff that didn't make sense about Microsoft's third proper games console – Kinect, the R7 000+ asking price, that fugly power brick – and the result is that it looks and feels like an even more enticing machine than the PS4. And when compared to the upcoming PS4 Pro, you can't help but notice that it also has a 4K Blu-ray player... while Sony's new machine doesn't. Which means that if you're the proud owner of a fancy Ultra HD TV, this is now the console to get.

Stuff says ★★★★★

The best games console you buy right now, thanks to its 4K smarts, not to mention exclusives like *Gears of War 4*

2



PlayStation 4 Slim

Rtba / playstation.com/za

This is the old PS4 squeezed into a 20% smaller package, and it still delivers an awesome console gaming experience. But if you see a 4K TV in your future, you're better off saving for the PS4 Pro.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Better than the old PS4 in almost every way

3



PlayStation 3 Slim

from R3 000 / playstation.com/za

The PS3 is more of a value proposition than ever. A reduced price, massive back catalogue and... did we mention the reduced price. Bonus: Online play is still free, too.

Stuff says ★★★★★

If you missed out the past decade, now's your chance to fix it

4



Xbox 360 Slim

★★★★☆ from R2 500 / xbox.com/za

Technically the better console, but for one thing. Having to pay to play with mates grates.

5



Nintendo Wii U

★★★★☆ from R4 800 / nintendo.co.za

While it hasn't had the impact of the original Wii, don't underestimate the U's fun factor.

SLASH YOUR PS4 PRO LOAD TIMES

Stop twiddling your thumbs waiting for games to load and start using them to shoot aliens by swapping in an SSD drive...

● **Buy an SSD.** Swapping the PS4 Pro's hard drive for an SSD that supports SATA 3 speeds can cut its load times in half. We went for the HyperX Fury 240GB drive (R1700, wootware.co.za), but if you need to install more than a few games go instead for the SanDisk Ultra II SSD 960 GB (R4 600, takealot.com).

● **Get busy installin'.** First up, save your games to the cloud and a USB drive. Now shut the PS4 Pro down, pull off its panel and unscrew the drive mount. Swap in the SSD and screw everything back together again.

● **Reboot your gaming life.** Go to bit.ly/ps4prossd and click on 'Perform a new installation of the system software'. A download will commence. All done? Re-download your games and enjoy your speedy load times.



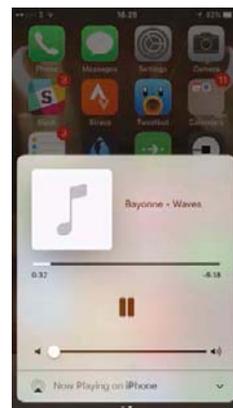
TURN YOUTUBE INTO SPOTIFY

Being able to have YouTube playing music in the background on both iOS and Android phones makes it a decent alternative to Spotify. Here's how...

On Android: Download and install Firefox (Free, play.google.com). Once that's done, it's simply a case of going to youtube.com and minimising the app. If you want to DJ outside of YouTube with access to pause and play controls, you'll need to use an app such as MX Player (Free, Android).

On iOS: Open Safari and go to the YouTube site. Sign in if you want access

to your saved playlists, then pick a video. Press Home, slide up Control Centre from the bottom of the screen, hit Play and you're golden.



THE BIG QUESTION

WHICH APP SHOULD I USE TO RUN MY LIFE?

THE SIMPLE ONE

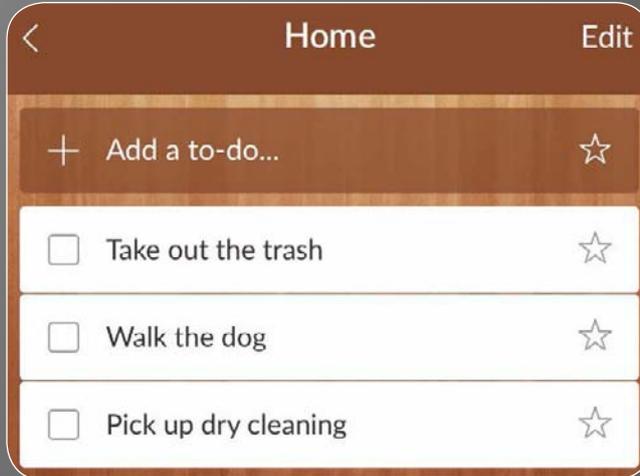
WUNDERLIST

from Free / Android, iOS
wunderlist.com

Given that the simplest to-do option is to ignore your phone and scribble on a scrap of paper (see the sidebar for great ways to do that), apps often try too hard to impress. Also, quite a lot of them are fine for one person wedded to a single device, but less useful when you want to get at your lists from various locations or bring other people along for the ride.

Wunderlist is the antithesis of such products, being available in app form for Windows, Mac, Android, iOS and Windows Phone, and online for people lumbered with a BlackBerry.

The base app is smart, simple and approachable. You can use



it to create straightforward to-do lists, or complex task management structures involving dates, sub-tasks and multiple people. Unrestricted versions of the office-like features require a R100/month pro upgrade, but the free version should do absolutely fine for most people.

NOW DO THIS...
ADD FILES

Wunderlist gives you the means to add more than just dates, reminders and notes — each task can also have a file attached. These can be grabbed from local storage on your smartphone or from Dropbox.



SPECIAL SKILL
POMODORO TIMER

Tap the clock icon to access an interval timer, then set 'focus' and 'relax' durations. You then work when 'focus' is shown and do whatever you want when 'relax' appears. And you know what? It actually works.

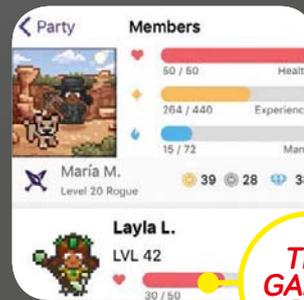
THE FRIENDLY ONE

PROUD

R80 / iOS • R150 / macOS
useproud.com

Proud is split into three tabs: lists, reminders and history. In lists, you define your tasks, breaking them down into manageable chunks; anything assigned a time abruptly dashes over to the reminders tab; and completed tasks permanently snooze in history.

What sets Proud apart from its contemporaries is its human points of reference — it talks about 'this afternoon' and 'next week' rather than cold, clinical hours and minutes. Fancy taking a break to watch a film? Go for it — Proud won't complain, it'll just bump your deadlines accordingly.



THE GAMEY ONE

HABITICA

Free (IAPs) / Android, iOS
habitica.com

Habitica turns life into a game, transforming task management chores into an RPG.

Although the app includes the usual lists, everything is imagined as a game world populated by little NES-like heroes and horrors. Habits and tasks are monsters you duff up... and if you slip up in the real world, your pixelated mini-you gets a kicking.

PEN TO PAPER



1 Bullet Journal

Prefer writing in an actual paper notebook? This one has been designed for tracking the past, organising the present and planning the future, using a system of symbols.
\$24.95 /
bulletjournal.com



2 Self Journal

This one's all about balancing day-to-day tasks and larger life goals. You plan goals for the following three months, breaking them down into manageable chunks, and then create a daily action plan.
R440 /
bestself.co



3 Wrights Notes

These notebooks let you customise the pages within. Facing pages can have different designs, including lines, dots, device wireframes, calendars and to-do lists.
R300 /
wrightsnotes.com

1

HOT
BUY

Fujifilm X-T2

R25 000 (body only) / fujifilm.co.za

The X-T2 is an excellent lesson in how to upgrade an already great gadget. The X-T1 was itself a brilliant camera, so Fuji gave it superb video and autofocus skills to go with the already top weatherproof build. Sure, it's pricey, but it's also worth every cent. What you're getting here is a camera that approaches high-end DSLRs for speed and rivals pretty much any camera for image quality, so it's a truly superb all-rounder.

Stuff says ★★★★★

A dream of a camera that barely strays from perfection from start to finish – and has brilliant 4K video skills

1

HOT
BUY

Panasonic Lumix LX100

R14 000 / panasonic.com/za

This is one of the most capable premium compacts on the market – and the LX100's 4K capabilities give it a crucial edge over its rivals. HD video capture and superb stills performance make the Panasonic Lumix LX100 a star performer when it comes to the basics too. It doesn't hurt at all that the LX100 is priced affordably enough that almost anyone can get it. 4K on the go is within reach of most photography wallets. Connectivity and optical image stabilisation just seal the deal.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Having 4K in your pocket goes a long way when you're shooting on the run

2



Fujifilm X-Pro2

R27 000 (body only) / fujifilm.co.za

Top-class handling and stills performance make this a superb – if just short of perfect – camera. Why short of perfect? Because video feels like a decidedly secondary skill. But if you want brilliant stills this is for you.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Perfect for professional portability

2



Canon PowerShot G7 X Mark II

R9 900 / canon.co.za

The latest in Canon's stable, the updated G7 X delivers incredible image quality and low-light performance. A tilting LCD, continuous shooting at 8fps, 20.1MP 1in sensor, and NFC and Wi-Fi support make it a great buy.

Stuff says ★★★★★

Ticks all the basic boxes, connectivity just seals it

3



Canon EOS 80D

R16 500 / canon.co.za

Even a child would get great results with the 80D – it's the photographic equivalent of playing FIFA 17 as Barcelona, on full auto mode, against Burnley. This takes the hard work out of getting fantastic photos.

Stuff says ★★★★★

If you want simplicity, you won't get much better

3



Fujifilm X70

★★★★★ R11 500 / fujifilm.co.za

A touch sensitive, tilting display makes changing setting or grabbing focus with the X70 a pleasure and its old-school looks and healthy selection of manual dials makes it every bit the serious imaging tool.

Stuff says ★★★★★

The blend of old and new may attract hipsters

4



Fujifilm X-T10

★★★★★ R11 600 (body only) / fujifilm.co.za

The X-T10 beats most other choices at any price. It also handles beautifully.

4



Nikon Coolpix AW130

★★★★★ R6 800 / nikon.co.za

Waterproof, cold-proof and shock proof, this is the one to haul where others fear to tread.

5



Canon EOS 5DS

★★★★★ R43 000 / canon.co.za

A fantastic piece of kit that any pixel-peeping SLR fan will get heaps of enjoyment out of.

5



Fujifilm X30

★★★★★ R7 400 / fujifilm.co.za

More retro but under the hood lies an all-modern compact that'll snag your shots.

HOW TO BUY A LAPTOP

A laptop is your portable companion, so it's important you make the right buying decision. Allow *Stuff* to take you through the process...

JARGON BUSTER

RAM

If a processor is your laptop's engine, then RAM is the grease that keeps it in motion.

USB-C

A new connection for plugging a mouse, hard drive or phone into your laptop.

SSD

Solid State Drives are faster than traditional hard drives for storing and accessing data.



BASIC REQUIREMENTS

1 Size matters

Want a laptop for touring your hometown's coffee shops? A hefty 15-incher ain't much good to you. Want to get some video editing done on the fly? Then an 11in display isn't going to cut it. For most people, a 13in device will do. This screen size should offer enough power to get stuff done without weighing your backpack down.

● Get this:
Dell XPS 13
from R20 000 /
dell.co.za

2 Win win

Planning on spending less than R25 000 on your new laptop? That rules out any of Apple's latest MacBooks. Don't panic, though: Windows 10 is a huge improvement on Windows 8... although, if all you're going to demand from your laptop is the odd email and extended Netflix binging, then it's worth checking out Chromebooks with Google's Chrome OS.

● Get this:
Asus ZenBook UX305
R21 000 / asus.com

3 Major keys

The easiest way to spot a rubbish laptop? Start typing away on its keyboard. You can live with an underpowered CPU, but a keyboard that makes your fingers sting with cramp? No thanks. Big keys with plenty of travel are what you're after, so you'll get that satisfying clickety-clack noise. Apple's MacBook Pro has the best keyboard – but try it first.

● Get this:
Apple MacBook Pro
from R27 500 /
myistore.co.za

POWER-UPS

4 Spec it up

If you've just about settled on your budget, it's time to talk about processors. Sorry. Most laptops run on an Intel Core i or Core M chip. The former are built for stamina and portability; the latter give you considerably more power for video and photo editing. You'll also want 8GB of RAM and 256GB of SSD storage for files. More is more when it comes to memory, but these are the minimum specs we'd settle for.

5 Double down

With tablet hybrids now having reached the point where they'll happily chow through your iPlayer and Microsoft Office needs, they've become a genuine alternative to having to carry a giant slab of plastic around. That said, the best ones are expensive.



NOW ADD THESE

A WIRELESS MOUSE

No matter how big your laptop's trackpad is, it's never going to match a proper clicker for ease of use.



A PORTABLE HARD DRIVE

Stashing stuff in the cloud is all well and good, but only a portable drive will do for large editing jobs on the move.



1

HOT BUY



Raspberry Pi 3

R710 / za.rs-online.com

You don't have to be big on coding to enjoy the Raspberry Pi. With some basic tweaking, you can turn this R710 tiny-puter into a very respectable desktop PC, retro gaming machine or media centre – and that's just the start. The Pi 3 is also the perfect update to its predecessor: you get loads more power (about the same as a mid-range smartphone), integrated Wi-Fi and Bluetooth, and it still costs less than a PS4 game.

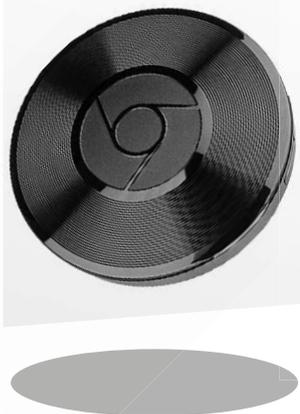
Stuff says ★★★★★
Opens up a world of tech possibilities for what is a positively diddy asking price



● **NOW ADD THIS**
Raspberry Pi Camera Module V2
 Not every Pi 3 project has to be a homage to your childhood console. This adds smartphone photo-pizzazz. R500 / za.rs-online.com

- **TIPS & TRICKS**
- Plonk that Pi camera you bought on a birdfeeder and you'll be able edit your own documentary.
- The free, open-source Kodi will turn a Pi into a media centre for watching your locally stored films and series.
- Planning on turning your Pi into a SNES emulator? Legally, you must own the games to play them.

2



Google Chromecast Audio
 R1 050 / takealot.com

This disc doesn't just transform the streaming capabilities of your speakers – its lossless hi-res audio option can also boost their sound quality. This is an infinitely superior alternative to streaming via Bluetooth, with less battery drain and no interruption from calls.

Stuff says ★★★★★
 If you've not got a Sonos setup, this'll do roughly the same job

3



Moov Now
 R1 200 / quantifi.co.za

You know you're onto a winner when your fitness gadget isn't just a tracker but a personal trainer. The Moov is a honeycomb-covered workout guide with voice coaching and rep-counting. Daily step tracking isn't its strong suit, but it auto-detects your sleep.

Stuff says ★★★★★
 The best budget tracker – gives most Fitbits a run for their money

4



Vodafone Smart Prime 7
 ★★★★★ R1 800 / vodacom.co.za
 On specs alone, the Smart Prime 7 beats phones that are twice the price.

5



SoundMagic E10C
 ★★★★★ R540 / sound-magic.co.za
 SoundMagic is royalty when it comes to budget buds. For under R700, these are stupendous.

6



Pokemon Go Plus
 ★★★★★ R700 / awx.co.za
 Feed your addiction with a wrist-mounted pokemon detector. Hurry, they sell out fast.

7



Fujifilm Instax Mini 8
 ★★★★★ R1 100 / fujifilm.co.za
 Go retro with the brightly coloured Instax Mini 8 from Fuji. Film'll cost ya but it's worth the outlay.

8



Amazon Kindle
 ★★★★★ from R1 600 / takealot.com
 Top of our holiday packing list, the basic Kindle is thinner and lighter than its predecessor.

9



Samsung Gear VR
 ★★★★★☆ R1 900 / samsung.com/za
 Perfect if you're looking to play *Hitman GO* in VR, or enjoy Netflix or live sport in 360°.

10



Xiaomi Mi Power Bank 10400
 ★★★★★☆ R300 / mia.africa.com
 Everyone could use extra power but having to fork out for it sucks. Thankfully, you don't.

1

HOT BUY



JBL Xtreme

R4 700 / incredible.co.za

The perfect portable speaker is good looking, rugged, offers great stamina, and plays nicely with others. Basically, the perfect speaker is Victor Matfield if he could sing opera. But wait, can Mattie charge two devices at the same time from a pair of USB ports, does he come with a shoulder strap, and can he survive being rinsed off under a tap? Sure, he ticks the last box, but the JBL ticks all three. Also, can he sing opera? 'Cause the JBL can sing anything. Sorry Mattie.

Stuff says ★★★★★
Stellar sound, durability, and a low price tag make JBL's Xtreme unbeatable



● **NOW ADD THIS Tidal**
Sick of playing your iTunes library on repeat? Sign up to Tidal for more new music than you could ever possibly listen to.
from R130/month / tidal.com

2



UE Boom 2
R3 500 / ultimateears.com

Years making in-ear monitors for musos means Ultimate Ears knows its bass from its mids. Water-, dust- and drop-proofing along with 360° sound, 15-hour battery life and a slick app so friends can play DJ makes the Boom 2 our pick of the pint-sized pack.

Stuff says ★★★★★
If you were going to take one of these surfing, this is the one

3



Braven 705
R2 000 / braven.com

Want a cheapish speaker that doubles as a battery pack, can survive wind, rain and a bit of rough treatment but is also very compact? Braven's got you covered. Plus, invest in a second (or get a friend to) and your portable party just got proper stereo sound.

Stuff says ★★★★★
The 705 sounds far punchier when it (and you) has friends over

4



B&O Beolit 15
★★★★★ R10 500 / bang-olufsen.com
The Danish supermodel of speakers, though the price tag means it's a tad high maintenance.

5



Bose SoundDock III
★★★★★ R4 800 / bose.com
The SoundDock isn't just for high-end hotels any more – it looks just at home in your own.

6



Marshall Stanmore
★★★★★ R6 000 / myistore.co.za
It's not a stadium stack but it wouldn't look out of place on a tiny stage with large sound.

7



JBL Flip 3
★★★★☆ R2 000 / jbl.com
It won't cost a limb and it'll go for ten hours. If you have a party in your pants, this'll bring the noise.

8



Skullcandy Air Raid
★★★★☆ R2 000 / lucksbrands.co.za
It's not a set of technicolour cans but the sound will punch you in the face. Flops at max volume.

9



Shox Spin
★★★★☆ R800 / tevo.co.za
Cheap, stylish and able to work as a conference caller. Not the best sounding but... cheap.

10



Beats Pill 2.0
★★★★☆ R4 000 / myistore.co.za
A cautionary tale in speaker form, remember that high price doesn't always mean quality.



SHOULD I UPGRADE? PLAYSTATION 4 PRO

DO IT!

4K gaming

1TB storage

HOLD OFF!

No exclusive games

No 4K Blu-ray drive

There's a reason why you were seduced by the PS4 rather than a gaming PC. For one it's cheaper, yet still provides high-end graphical power and speed. More importantly, it has an impressive first-party line-up including *Uncharted 4* and *Bloodborne*.

But what sets the console apart from the PC is that you don't need to dig into your wallet every year to tweak your hardware. After all, you're not obsessed with always

having the highest resolution. You're happy to wait five years before shelling out on an upgrade... aren't you?

4K conversion

But then the PS4 Pro came along and threw the console cycle into disarray. You promised you wouldn't behave like one of those savage PC gamers and dump your savings on a current-gen upgrade... then again, have you

seen *Horizon Zero Dawn* in 4K? Games optimised for the Pro look absolutely stunning on a 4K HDR TV.

If you need another incentive to upgrade, you'll be glad to hear that 1TB of storage is mighty useful for holding dozens of games. So while the thought of becoming more like those PC nerds might fill you with terror, if you've got an expensive telly you might as well make use of it and go Pro.



GOLIATHUS SPEED
MOUSE PAD
34995



DEATHADDER CHROMA
GAMING MOUSE
1 39995



KRAKEN CHROMA
7.1 HEADSET
1 99995



BLACKWIDOW CHROMA
GAMING KEYBOARD
3 49995

1

HOT
BUY

The Witcher III: The Wild Hunt

from R575 / PC/PS4/Xbox One

Wouldn't you know it, The Witcher 3 is still here. But not just because it's an excellent game. It got better, with the launch of the Game of the Year Edition, incorporating *Hearts of Stone* and *Blood and Wine*, as well as every other bit of additional content made for 2015 and 2016's best game. You have to play it now.

Stuff says ★★★★★

If you somehow missed it, now is your chance to rectify that terrible, terrible error. See you in two months.

2



Deus Ex: Mankind Divided

★★★★★ from R575 / PC/PS4/Xbox One

Adam Jensen is back on the case following the events of *Human Revolution*. He's not dead yet, folks, and he's sneakier than ever. Though you may want to indulge in the better shooting mechanics amid glorious cyberpunk settings a little too. Play it twice in order to get the full cybernetic experience.

3



Rise of the Tomb Raider: 20 Year Celebration

★★★★★ from R540 / PC/PS4

Lara's latest is now fully launched, with every bit of DLC, new content and even a shade of VR support.

7



XCOM 2

★★★★★ from R650 / PC/PS4/Xbox One

No longer a PC exclusive, *XCOM 2* is here to suck away hours of your life, Commander.

4



Tom Clancy's The Division

★★★★★ from R650 / PC/PS4/Xbox One

An open-world, shooter set in a devastated New York is a great online playground.

8



Star Wars Battlefront

★★★★★ from R650 / PC, PS4, Xbox One

Striding the battlefield as Darth Vader is something any Star Wars fan has to do.

5



Overwatch

★★★★★ from R950 / PC/PS4/Xbox One

Blizzard's own multi-coloured shooter is a time-sink of epic proportions. Just the way we like it.

9



Uncharted 4

★★★★★ from R1 000 / PS4

The last time that we'll be able to play as Nathan Drake, unless they make a racing game...

6



Fallout 4

★★★★★ from R740 / PC/PS4/Xbox One

Wasteland exploration has only hit its stride now that all of the DLC is out – Go forth and level.

10



Call of Duty: Black Ops III

★★★★★ from R1 000 / PC/PS4/Xbox One

This is on the list till *Infinite Warfare* drops – which should be just as we go to print.

**IFROGZ.**

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- THE EARBUD TIPS FOR LIFE LIMITED LIFETIME WARRANTY MEANS IF YOUR EAR TIPS GET WORN OR DAMAGED, WE WILL REPLACE THEM.



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A WORLD AWAITS

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PERSONAL HOVERING STREETLAMPS

P

Personal Hovering Streetlamps? That'll make a good band name.

Debut album: *Floatilluminati*.

Or something. We're not great musicians, but we know our tech, and this fleet of hovering guardian angels is as techy as things come. We've all seen drones before, including ones that automatically follow you around – they're handy for capturing gnarly 1780° snowflips – but these Fleetlights aren't designed to capture death-defying stunts. Quite the opposite – they're there to keep you safe by lighting up your path along dark

and dangerous routes, whether you're driving, cycling, or trudging along a gloomy winter path.

Sooo, they make you an easy target?

Granted, walking across a dodgy inner-city park with a personal spotlight lighting you up like a Christmas tree for muggers isn't the most sensible of ideas. But realistically, you're more likely to have a close encounter with a UFO-chaser. There's no doubt that you'll be (and feel) far safer with your own personal luminary bodyguard. Sticks, potholes, stray dogs – the world is a perilous place, and

twisted ankles, broken noses and scraped knees are only ever one or two stumbles away.

Jeez Mum, relax. I can look after myself. Though I could still do with a few of these...

Sadly, the Fleetlights are just a proof of concept for now, whipped up by Direct Line to show off how future accidents could be prevented. The tech is real, though, and it works. A smartphone app dispatches drones to a user's exact location. They'll constantly stay ahead of that user along his or her route, until they're dismissed at the tap of a button.

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AVAILABLE AT

Aim high with a touch of Elegance



Aim higher in life with the stylishly new Hisense Infinity Elegance (E76) smartphone.

Boasting an ultra-slim design, metal-cased appearance and a 5.5" FHD screen, the Infinity Elegance fits perfectly into your hand and fabulous lifestyle. Equipped with a 13 megapixel camera (and Dual LED flash technology), you can now capture all of life's best moments and store more videos, music and pictures compliments of expandable memory – up to 128GB. To ensure that only you have sole access to those videos, pictures and more, the Android-operated Infinity Elegance features advanced biometric technology, allowing you to match two or more human fingerprints. Welcome security at your fingertips - tastefully.

Hisense
infinity Elegance

#AimHigh     hisense.co.za