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THE BEST OF 2014!

- TOP SMARTPHONES
- TOP PHABLETS
- TOP TABLETS
- TOP SCIENCE
- TOP MOVIES
- TOP COMICS

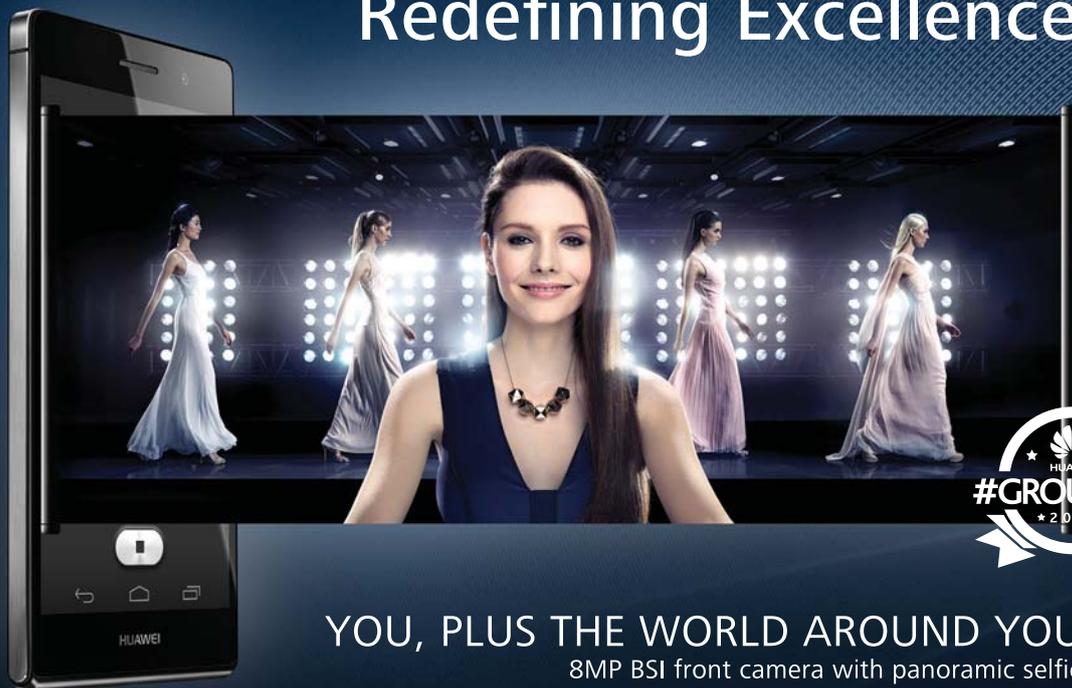
OUR SCI-FI SHORT STORY
**WINNER
INSIDE!**



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PHILIPS

AND THE WINNER IS...

I often hope to see a UFO, and still cling to Carl Sagan's belief that "In the vastness of the Cosmos there must be other civilizations far older and more advanced than ours." One could assume that a number of the writers who entered the TechSmart Gigabyte sci-fi short story competition would love to do the same, or maybe have done so already. Nonetheless, contact with extra-terrestrial life or not, it seems as if sci-fi writing is alive and well in SA, with our competition exceeding expectations with over 90 entries received. It was an absolute pleasure working through them, with amazing concepts being put forth - from spacecrafts hovering over desolated rugby fields, the cure for Ebola eventually destroying mankind, alien drug dealers, and rhinos with laser beams on their horns invading Mbombela.

Eventually it was the tale of a pug and his hidden abilities that won the judging panel over. For your reading pleasure, go to p48 to read Zoe Hinis's excellent *The Elder God Detector*. Zoe walks away with a super Gigabyte notebook, for which we can thank JP Tsu of Gigabyte who supported the competition from the start. My thanks also to my fellow judges who are regular contributors to our magazine - Moray Rhoda, Stephen Aspeling and Ryan Noik. Lastly, a massive thanks to all who entered; without your support our 2015 sci-fi competition will not be possible.

Also, Hinis's story will not be the only one available to read, since we have some special news regarding some of the other entries. All I can say is stay tuned for more info.

Enjoy the issue,

Mike Joubert
mike@techsmart.co.za



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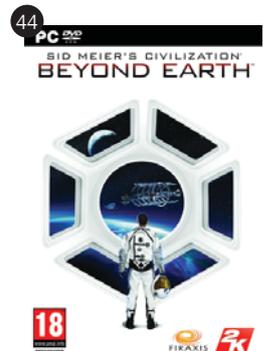
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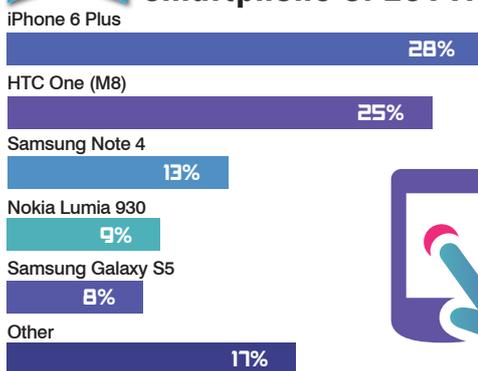


FROM THE COVER

Model: Bianca from Spotlight Agency
Photographer: Basil Koufos - 082-439-2022
Make-up: Tarryn - 083-380-0835



Which is your choice for smartphone of 2014?



Raymond Makena
@RaymondMakena

@TechSmartMag: #smartphone despite software glitches here & there the iPhone 6 displays sophistication a lot of thought has been put into it

Themba Ngoma
@ThembaNgoma30

@techsmartmag #Smartphone of the Year Samsung Galaxy Note 4, reason - 5.7 qHD Display and 3 GB Ram.

Tiego
@Tiego_Modisa

@TechSmartMag the Galaxy Note 4, because it's full house. Simple as that.

Mustakim Khalifa
@KhalifaMustakim

@TechSmartMag Note 4 should receive the title of #smartphone of the year. Because it out class other phones in terms of Display and specs

GREAT GEAR

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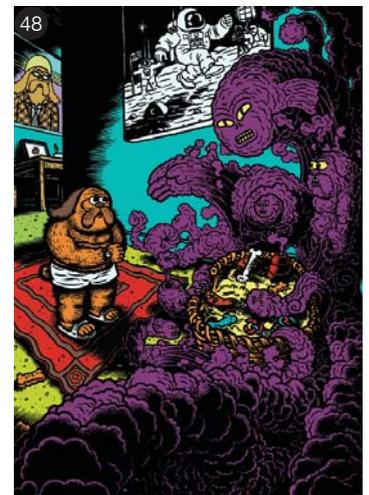
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GREAT GEAR!

Who says the Americans can't make supercars? Yes, the Trion Nemesis is designed and constructed in the US, providing enough reasons to keep its European counterparts on their toes.

TRION NEMESIS RR

Each Trion Nemesis vehicle is handcrafted in Orange County, California, a fact that the American manufacturer is very proud of. There are four different models found within the Nemesis range, with the RR sitting proudly on top.

Not to be confused with a McLaren P1, the Nemesis RR comprises of a number of captivating lines and contours, most notably drawing onlookers' eyes to a distinct front end that almost wills the car to move forward by itself. Added to this is an active aero-dynamics system programmable to fit different driving styles.

Under the bonnet is the RR's real party piece: a twin-turbocharged V8 engine that develops an unfathomable 1490 kW. This is paired with Trion's own specially designed 8-speed automatic transmission.

Should some would-be hypercar pretender wish to take you on, you can rest assured that the Nemesis RR can cope comfortably, as it touts a 0-100 km/h of 2.9 seconds. Its top speed? A massive 434 km/h, giving the world record holder Hennessey Venom GT a run for its money.

Price only available on enquiry, with an estimated R2.5 million needed to get one of the 50 manufactured models in your garage by 2016.

AUDI R8 COMPETITION

Audi's top of the range supercar just got an upgrade. The R8 Competition is a limited edition model, and serves as the Stuttgart-based manufacturer's most powerful production car to date. Housing the same 425 kW 5.2 litre V10 engine as the racing equivalent Audi R8, this road-going version can reach 100 km/h from a standstill in just 3.2 seconds. Added to this is a top speed of 320 km/h, with Audi only set to manufacture 60 units at this stage. Pricing for the Audi R8 Competition is unconfirmed. **ts**



GREAT GEAR!

AEROMOBIL 3.0 FLYING CAR

Flying cars may not be a fully-fledged reality yet, but the AeroMobil 3.0 from the eponymously named design firm with Slovakian roots is hoping to inch us ever closer.

As the name would indicate, this is the third model that the AeroMobil team has designed, taking 14 years to reach this point.

The AeroMobil 3.0 features an 8.32 metre-long wingspan, with each collapsible wing rotating 90 degrees and slotting into the frame of the AeroMobil 3.0 itself

When in flight mode, it can achieve a top speed of 200 km/h in air. Once in cruising altitude, the AeroMobil 3.0 has a range of 700 kilometres, while consuming fuel at an estimated 15 l/hr.

No official pricing or release date yet, since the AeroMobil 3.0 is still in the prototype phase.

With a steel framework and carbon fibre coating throughout, it has a cabin capable of seating two people. Its relatively lightweight construction means that it can automatically transform rather speedily when required.

Although not strictly road legal just yet, once in car mode it can hit a maximum speed in excess of 160 km/h. The width also shrinks down to 2.24 metres, making it only slightly wider than a SUV.

AERO MVP AIRPLANE

Not too dissimilar in concept to the AeroMobil 3.0 above, the Aero MVP is the technological equivalent of a duck, comfortable both in the air and on the water. Designed in the States, the Aero MVP is also in its third iteration and is termed as a Sport Aircraft. Its engine cowl maximises airflow to all cylinders, with a Rotax 900 series engine being favoured by the designers to reach an estimated 100 knots (185 km/h). Price is available on enquiry, and should appeal to those who want to frequent both the Vaal and Hartbeespoort Dam on the same day. **ts**

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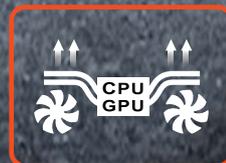
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Massive Quad-storage
with two 512 GB mSATA
SSD + two 2TB HDD

MADE in TAIWAN



P35X v3

15.6"

Display 15.6" FHD 1920X1080 Wide Viewing Angle LCD
 CPU 4th Generation intel Core i7-4710HQ
 Video Graphic GTX 980M GDDR5 8GB
 System memory 8GB*2
 Storage mSATA 128GB*2 + 1TB



P27G v2

17.3"

Display 17.3" FHD 1920X1080 LCD
 CPU 4th Generation Intel Core i7-4810MQ 2.8-3.8GHz
 Video Graphics GTX 860M GDDR5 2GB
 System memory 8GB*2
 Storage mSATA 128GB + HDD 1TB

Top 5 SMARTPHONES OF 2014

2014 was bustling with more than enough new devices making it onto the TechSmart review desks. So which products came out tops? Let's start off with smartphones first....



5

Samsung Galaxy S5

For many local Android smartphone users, Samsung's Galaxy S-range remains the pinnacle of smartphones, with the S5 including an imposing array of features (water and dust resistance, heart rate monitor) and added extras (ADH service) to perhaps wow buyers instead. The reason it does not place higher on our list is a less than enticing design and Samsung's never-ending love affair with plastic. Move the cons to the side however and you've got a processing powerhouse that outperforms the majority of flagships on the market.

Samsung flagship devices have always had great displays and the same applies here, since the S5 touts a 5.1" screen (1080x1920) that registers a 432 ppi pixel density. One of its other key features is a fantastic 16 MP camera, with a rapid autofocus that easily matches your camera trigger finger. If the plastic-heavy design does not phase you, then the S5 is a worthy high performance offering for any Android fan.

-  **ANDROID**
-  **5.1", 432 PPI**
-  **2.5 GHZ QUALCOMM SNAPDRAGON 801, 2 GB**
-  **R 10 000**

Nokia Lumia 930

4

2014 has been the best year yet for Nokia's Lumia range of Windows Phone devices. Firmly in front though was the outstanding Lumia 930, which also served as Nokia's flagship for the newly enhanced Windows Phone 8.1 OS. In terms of design Nokia has always kept things simple and the Lumia 930 is no different. A single piece of aluminium frames the device, with a hardened plastic cover doing duty on the back (coloured in one of Nokia's signature bright hues). Added to this is a beautiful 5" display (1080x1920), bright throughout and picking up all the nuanced detail while web browsing or watching videos.

Handling the processing is a 2.2 GHz quad-core Qualcomm Snapdragon 800 processor, which makes the Lumia 930 speedy and efficient while multitasking. The 20 MP camera produces great images, although it's slightly slow when it comes to autofocus. Priced at R8 000, the Lumia 930 will also sadly be the last ever Nokia smartphone to appear on our yearly Top 5, since soon all Nokia Lumia devices will be known as Microsoft Lumia.

-  **WINDOWS PHONE 8.1**
-  **5", 441 PPI**
-  **2.2 GHZ QUALCOMM SNAPDRAGON 800, 2 GB**
-  **R 8 000**



Huawei Ascend P7



3

One of the welcome surprises of 2014 was Huawei's Ascend P7 smartphone, ticking all the necessary boxes as a flagship device and delivering a solid experience while keeping cost-savvy users more than happy. The Ascend P7 is a big step up from last year's P6 and dashes the misconception that a flagship device need cost more than R10k to be good. The P7 is also well crafted, surviving more than a few tumbles here in the office.

The 5" (1080x1920) display is also impressive, touting a 441 ppi pixel density to serve as proof of its clarity and crispness. Internally one will find a flagship pedigree as well, as Huawei has favoured a quad-core HiSilicon Kirin processor clocked at 1.8 GHz. The Ascend P7 is very much a hassle free phone with a great R6 700 price tag. As far as Huawei is concerned, all we can say is keep a firm eye on them in future, they are going to be huge.



ANDROID



5", 441 PPI



1.8 GHZ HISILICON KIRIN 910T, 2 GB



R R6 700



Apple iPhone 6

Whether or not bigger is better for Apple remains to be seen, but its latest smartphone offering has (luckily) succumbed to pressure and stretched its display to 4.7" (750x1334). Along with the increased dimensions, Cupertino has managed to keep the pixel density at 326 ppi, matching that of the 4" iPhone 5s. In terms of changes, the design sees the most notable difference, as Apple moved from angular chamfered edges to smooth curved ones – a deliciously appealing turn for the better.

A look inside sees a new dual-core A8 chipset proving the perfect foil to the iOS 8 interface, making it Apple's most efficient performing smartphone to date. While the 5s didn't set the world alight, the iPhone 6 proves Apple is far from stale.



iOS



4.7", 326 PPI



1.4 GHZ A8, 1 GB



R R9 900 (16 GB)



2

HTC One (M8)



1

With a number of manufacturers vying for the top spot, it was Taiwanese company HTC's One (M8) flagship that shone the brightest. Beautifully constructed, the One (M8)'s body is milled from a single piece of aluminium and certainly serves as one of the best looking devices to have landed on our review desk, ever. Added to this is a sharp and nuanced 5" Super LCD3 (1080x1920) display that made media viewing particularly enjoyable.

Not just a looker, the One (M8) also features a host of internal specs to ensure it easily keeps up with the competition. A quad-core Qualcomm Snapdragon 801 processor is doing the heavy lifting, with 2 GB of RAM also thrown into the mix, making it perfectly adept at handling any high-end multitasking. Added to this is a solid dual-4 megapixel camera on the rear and 2600 mAh battery to last a day and then some, resulting in an all-round performer that won't miss a beat. No matter what we asked of the One (M8), it always came up trumps and did not flinch for a second, rightfully earning its place atop our list. **ts**



ANDROID



5", 441 PPI



2.3 GHZ QUALCOMM SNAPDRAGON 801, 2 GB



R R9 000



Top 5 PHABLETS OF 2014

2014 was clearly the year of the phablet, with everyone throwing their hat in the ring. Here are the top five phablets that stood out above the rest.



Hisense Infinity Maxe X1

5

Hisense may not be a household name in terms of smartphones and phablets, but the 6.8" Infinity Maxe X1 is well worth noting. The reason why it finds its way onto our list is the supreme value for money proposition it presents: for a mere R5 000 you get a full HD 6.8" display and a Snapdragon 800 processor. Its size does blur the line between phablet and tablet, and can become a bit unwieldy at times, but this is quickly forgotten when viewing content or playing games. A stylus would have been a welcome addition, but luckily there's a large 3900 mAh battery onboard, ensuring that two days life is easily achieved. While the X1 might be plastic heavy, it gives users plenty of bang for their bucks.



ANDROID



6.8", 323 PPI



2.3 GHZ QUALCOMM SNAPDRAGON 800, 2 GB



R 5 000

Nokia Lumia 1520

4

Along with Apple, Nokia also took the plunge and tried its hand at phablets, resulting in two 6" devices, with the Lumia 1520 serving as flagship. The 1520 is the second largest phablet on our list and the only phablet running Windows Phone 8 (8.1 with update). Its size makes it perfectly suited for viewing content in landscape, especially on its bright and saturated display featuring plenty of clarity at 367 ppi.

Also in the mix is a Qualcomm Snapdragon 800 processor and 2 GB of RAM. This means the Lumia 1520 is snappy when multitasking, an important concern for phablet users. Much like the iPhone 6 Plus, the Lumia 1520 does not make the most of its large real estate, and could also benefit from an S Pen-like stylus in our opinion. In spite of this, the Lumia 1520 is still a well-made device that any user should consider carrying - if it can fit in your pocket.



ANDROID



2.2 GHZ QUALCOMM SNAPDRAGON 800, 2 GB



6", 367 PPI



R 9 000



Apple iPhone 6 Plus

3

The frenzy following the iPhone 6 Plus launch in September was quickly negated by the #bendgate incident. But that's not the reason why Apple's first foray into phablets sits third on our list. Instead, the phablet does not fully capitalise on the increased dimensions that its 5.5" display affords. That being said though, there is still plenty to love about the 6 Plus, including its superb screen quality and the same A8 chip found on the smaller iPhone 6, and as such performs as good as it looks.

One of its key features is the excellent 8MP camera on the rear, utilising Apple's iSight technology to capture some fantastic images. The iPhone 6 Plus is a great all-round phablet, but expect the next iteration to really start challenging Samsung's Note range.



IOS 8



5.5", 401 PPI



1.4 GHZ A8, 1 GB



R 111 000 (16 GB)



LG G3

2

When it comes to specs, the LG G3 is not shy, with the South Korean manufacturer ensuring that its flagship tops every phablet measurable around. Its design is also quite striking, with LG incorporating a faux-aluminium coating on the rear of the device. Up front though is where the actions is, with the G3's 5.5" True HD IPS display registering a massive 534 ppi. You'd be hard pressed to find another mobile device with a better screen than the G3.

The G3 packs plenty of high end components under the hood as well, with 3 GB of RAM and a 2.5 GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon 801 processor ensuring that the G3 can handle work and play with ease. When we received the G3 for review back in July we were taken aback, since we only expected these types of specs in 2015. The fact that it did not end up on this year's top spot is set to cause grumblings amongst certain TechSmart staff members for at least well into the new year.



ANDROID



5.5", 534 PPI



2.5 GHZ QUALCOMM SNAPDRAGON 801, 2 GB



R 9 000

Samsung Galaxy Note 4

1

Having pioneered the phablet back in 2011 with the original Note, Samsung's latest offering still proves the one to beat. Serving up stronger specs than its predecessor, there is very little that the Galaxy Note 4 can't handle. From the moment you power up the Note 4, it feels special, sporting a 5.7" Quad HD display (1440x2560) that brings all multitasking elements to life. Samsung has integrated a host of high-end specs to deliver uncompromised performance, with a choice of Qualcomm's quad-core Snapdragon 805 chipset or a quad-core Exynos 5433 processor, both of which are available in SA.

The Note 4's real virtue however lies in the improved S Pen, upping this phablet's functionality and giving it a distinct edge over the competition. Added to this is an ultra-battery saving mode and fast charging feature to see you through a full day's use. When you factor in its outstanding 16 MP primary camera, the Note 4 has no discernible fault at all, taking it to the top spot as our phablet of the year. (See the review on p17) **ts**



ANDROID



5.7", 515 PPI



2.7 GHZ QUALCOMM SNAPDRAGON 805, 3 GB



R 111 500



Top 5

Those seeking an outstanding tablet have never had a better range of choices. Here are our top five that emerged this year.

Tablets of 2014



Sony Z3 Tablet Compact

We know they make excellent 10" tablets, but it was Sony's smaller Android that really caught our eye - the Z3 Tablet Compact. This 8" tablet boasts some impressive specs, including a 2.5 GHz quad-core processor plus 3 GB of memory, and at 270 g was easy on the hands. Granted, its 1920x1200 Triluminos screen might not be counted as ground-breaking in the resolution stakes. However, the device has an alluring trick up its sleeve that its competitors cannot claim - owners of the PS4 can switch gameplay from their console to their tablet using Remote Play. Additionally, its 16 GB of onboard memory can be supplemented by up to 128 GB via microSD card.



Android



8", 283 PPI



2.5 GHz Krait 400,
3 GB

R TBA

Lenovo ThinkPad Tablet 2

4

Beating the drum for Windows 8 in tablet form is this 10.1" offering from Lenovo. Beyond impressing with excellent build quality and ergonomics, we appreciated the smooth performance offered by the Intel Atom processor Z2760 (@1.8 GHz) and 2 GB of memory.

One nifty little addition that the other tablets on this list can't claim is that the ThinkPad Tablet 2 caters to flash drives with a full sized USB port, and no dongles required. Want more? It also sports a microSD card slot. This makes plugging in a drive filled with movies and media a pleasure, easily supplementing the onboard 64 GB storage. Along with this, the ten hours battery life helped make the Tablet 2 a Windows 8 winner.



Windows 8



1.8 GHz Intel Atom Z2760,
2 GB



10.1", 155 ppi



R 10 000

Dell Venue 8 Pro

One particular Windows 8 tablet that evoked particularly strong favour was the Venue 8 Pro. Admittedly, we were somewhat surprised by this one, for all the right reasons.

The tablet's build quality is outstanding, feeling reassuringly solid but not overly weighty in the hand. The Intel Atom processor (Z3740D) and 2 GB of memory provided a smooth performance across the board (which is saying a lot when it comes to Windows 8). However, really winning us over was the storage - 64 GB of onboard storage that can be expanded by a microSD card slot (up to 128 GB).



Windows 8

1.8 GHz Intel Atom Z3740D,
2 GB

8", 189 ppi



R R5 000

3



2

Samsung Galaxy Tab S

Impressing us no end is Samsung's top of the line 8.4" tablet, the Galaxy Tab S. In certain respects, the Tab S is a perfect storm of Android goodness, with a bright, luscious Super AMOLED screen boasting a 1600x2560 resolution (359 ppi).

Furthermore, we appreciated its two quad-cores and 3 GB of memory, which make short work of just about every task we thought to throw at it. And, while it offers outstanding battery life (up to 12 hours), it does so while adhering to that bastion of modern design, proving both light and thin. If you are concerned about the 16 GB of onboard storage, don't be - the Galaxy Tab accommodates up to 128 GB microSD cards.



Android



8.4", 359 ppi

1.9 GHz Cortex-A15
and 1.3 GHz Cortex-A7,
3 GB

R R 8 500



1

Apple iPad Air 2

Yet again securing our top spot is, who else but Apple with its latest iPad Air 2. The excellent 9.7" tablet titan received another bit of a specs bump this year, and the new Air 2 now boasts an even faster A8X processor, double the memory (2 GB) and, at 6.1 mm, is yet thinner than last year's model. Moreover, the Air 2 also brings a fingerprint sensor and Touch ID, mitigating the annoyance of having to enter your password every time you access the apps store. For those who insist on taking photos



iOS 8



9.7", 264 ppi

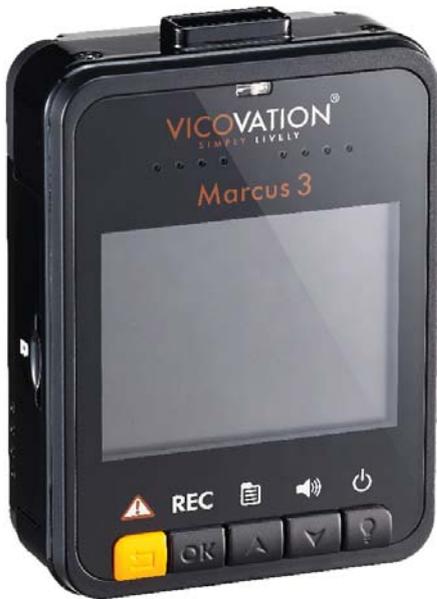
1.5 GHz A8X
2 GB

R R5 300

with a 9.7" device (why?), the Air 2 sports improved back (8 megapixels instead of 5) and front facing cameras. While the screen resolution is the same, at 2048x1536, the display has received an anti-glare coating as well. In short, consider this one of the best tablets, made even better. **ts**



VICOVATION VICO-MARCUS 3 DASHCAM



While not yet as big as they are in Russia, dash cameras are gaining traction in South Africa. We put the higher resolution of the Marcus 3 to the test.

While the Vicovation Vico-Marcus 3 might be elaborate in name, the unit itself is very compact and does not make for much of a disturbance while driving. It's much smaller than its older brother, the Vico-SF2, which after being tested we liked so much that we actually bought one.

High res, more frames

The Marcus 3 takes recording even further, now incorporating high-speed Full HD (1920x1080 at 60 fps) and also what Vicovation dubs Extreme HD, shooting video at 2304x1296 (at 30 fps). We actually preferred recording to be set at high-speed Full HD, opting to go for more frames per second than higher resolution. Once again you can't fault recording quality, while this dashcam records a wide 160° diagonal field.

So how exactly does this dashcam work? Once set up on your windshield, you don't actually need to do a thing, since it automatically starts recording as soon as you turn the key. You can view recordings on the 2" LCD screen at the back,

although we used this screen mainly to help with setup, preferring to watch files on a PC since you don't need any additional software to view the .mov files. We would recommend buying the highest class microSD card with at least 16 GB worth of space because file sizes are quite large.

Lights, camera, action

The Marcus 3's G-sensor automatically picks up if you were in a crash and saves 30 seconds before and after the incident. You also have an orange emergency record button that you can press to do the same. These files are saved separately and will not be recorded over. There is a date-stamp that records the time and date, while the Marcus-3 includes a slot for a GPS tracker which is sold separately.

The Vicovation Vico-Marcus 3 is a solid purchase if you are looking for a reliable dashcam. The extra high-def brings up the price to R3 000 from www.dashcamera.co.za. Receive 10% off your purchase when using the coupon code "TechSmart". [MJ] **ts**

WE ACTUALLY PREFERRED RECORDING TO BE SET AT HIGH-SPEED FULL HD, OPTING TO GO FOR MORE FRAMES PER SECOND THAN HIGHER RESOLUTION.

CARMATE PRO

No matter how good your multitasking skills may be, chances are that both hands are needed while driving. As such a hands-free smartphone kit can come in pretty handy while negotiating the Johannesburg CBD and taking a call at the same time. To that end, the Carmate Pro 4-in-1 universal car kit aims to make in-car multitasking a touch easier to manage.

The Carmate Pro's setup is fairly straightforward, with a power unit that slips into any cigarette lighter (putting it to better use in our opinion). With any concerns of batteries or power put aside, the rest of the Carmate Pro's features are quickly at hand. The two principal features are the Bluetooth-enabled music playing and call making functionality, both of which are carried out over a radio frequency of your choosing (interference free of course).

Get in and drive

Syncing up our smartphone to the Carmate Pro was a breeze, but does require users to act promptly. Should you not pair your device via Bluetooth in time, the connection is sometimes lost, requiring a reset to get things going again. Apart from this, it provided no hassles whatsoever, with calls and music playback sounding clear and crisp. If you're suffering from Bluetooth-ache, there's also a USB to microUSB cable, as well as a 3.5 mm headphone jack to connect to the Carmate Pro. The former also allows for smartphone charging, when the need arises. The only thing counting against it, is the slightly short adjustable arm linking the charger to the control unit, which may prove a problem for ill-positioned cigarette lighters.

Priced at R600, the Carmate Pro is certainly on par with most entry-level car kits. What makes it stand out however, is its simple setup and easy to use Bluetooth interface. Not to mention that long tangled wires and cables are kept well at bay. [RLC] **ts**



You only have so many hands for multitasking, which is why the Carmate Pro could be your next best travelling companion on the road.



WIN ONE OF TWO CARMATE PRO'S!!!

No more fiddling with your phone while driving! Stand a chance to win one of two Carmate Pro's, each valued at R600! Send us a mail to competition@techsmart.co.za with "I want to win the Carmate Pro!" in the title. Competition runs until 31 December 2014. Only entries from people living in South Africa will be considered. The judges' decision is final. Terms and conditions apply (bit.ly/tsterms). The winners will be announced during the second week of January 2015.

SAMSUNG GALAXY NOTE 4

With the Galaxy Note 4, Samsung shows just how far it has come and how much more mature and refined the device really is in 2014.

It was only a few years ago (2011) that the Note 1 first made its appearance, with some scoffing at the idea of a gigantic 5.4" screen gaining any traction.



THE NOTE 4 IS SAMSUNG'S BEST PHABLET, PERHAPS BEST PHONE, TO DATE.

Fast forward three iterations (and an extra 0.3") later, and the S Pen toting phablet has never been stronger. To start with, the Galaxy Note 4 addresses Samsung's Achilles heel (build quality), as the device's metallic trim makes it feel considerably more solid and premium than its predecessors. Helping matters is the fact that the faux leather stitched backing has been sent wherever tacky adornments go to die.

Screen dream

Furthermore, the Note 4's bright and rich screen simply looks outstanding, due to its Quad HD AMOLED display (2560x1440) and a superlative 515 ppi. This makes reading, browsing, viewing photos and movies on it a treat, while viewing angles are unrelentingly terrific.

As for performance, the phablet is blazingly fast, packing some serious power in its slim 8.5 mm and 176 g frame. The onboard Qualcomm Snapdragon 805 processor,

which clocks in at 2.7 GHz, along with the 3 GB of memory, made short work of everything we could throw at it. This ran the gamut from notetaking, web browsing, and playing games to digital sketching in the likes of Infinite Painter. We would be remiss not to give credit to the onboard 16 megapixel camera, which in our use, produced some impressive images.

Getting pensive

The one refinement we appreciated most of all though is the S Pen itself. The latest iteration is still comfortable to hold, but now offers twice the pressure sensitivity of its predecessor, as well as tilt recognition, making writing and drawing on the device a great deal smoother.

As for the cons, there are only two – the power button, which is placed where it is too easy to inadvertently hit, and the price, a whopping R11 000 off contract. Otherwise, the Note 4 is Samsung's best phablet, perhaps best phone, to date. [RN] **ts**

SAMSUNG GALAXY TAB S 8.4

There was much to love about the Galaxy Tab Pro 8.4, but the Tab S ups the ante further, boasting even better performance and longer life.

While the latest iteration of Apple's erstwhile iPad mini was underwhelming to say the least, the same cannot be said of Samsung, which has launched two mini competitors this year, both of which may well claim the crown as being the top Android tablets in this size class at the moment. The latest of these is the Galaxy S, also an 8.4" offering, but with



an even more sumptuous AMOLED screen while being considerably lighter (6.6 g) and thinner (6.6 mm) to boot.

Show stopper and starter

Starting with the former, the Super AMOLED capacitive touchscreen display (1600x2560, 359 ppi) is beautiful, especially when watching movies. Deep blacks, rich (perhaps even a tad too saturated) colors and faultless sharpness are a few of the Galaxy S' major strengths. Indeed, we dare say it is good enough to give those considering purchasing an iPad Mini 2 a pause.

Additionally, while the Galaxy Tab Pro 8.4 really made its presence known after a while of holding it, the Galaxy S is featherweight, and is considerably lighter and more comfortable to hold during long reading and browsing marathons.

But wait, there's more

There are two further noteworthy additions where the Galaxy S earned our nod of approval. The first is the battery life on board, which depending on usage, ranges between 10½ and 12½ hours' worth, a great deal better than the Galaxy Tab Pro's average

of 7½. Secondly, if you are like us and tend to pack as much media into your tablet as possible to get you through long flights, then you may be pleased to note that the maximum SD card capacity is now 128 GB rather than 64 GB. This easily compensated for the scant 16 GB of on-board storage.

As for performance, we had no reason to complain. Onboard is a quad-core 1.9 GHz Cortex-A15 & quad-core 1.3 GHz Cortex-A7 CPUs, whose grunt can most particularly be felt when playing games.

Final analysis

Is the Galaxy Tab S the perfect 8" tablet? Close, but not quite. We actually preferred the seemingly more solid albeit heavier build and back of the Galaxy Tab Pro, and the device is packed with Samsung bloatware. That being said, this is still an outstanding tablet, and if you are seeking an Android device at this size, is an easy and hearty recommendation. RRP: R8 500 [RN] **ts**

IT'S STILL AN OUTSTANDING TABLET, AND IF YOU ARE SEEKING AN ANDROID DEVICE AT THIS SIZE, IT'S AN EASY AND HEARTY RECOMMENDATION.

ACER C720P CHROMEBOOK

Google believes that if you already live a connected life (read have Wi-Fi) you can very easily live off bread, water and the services they offer alone.

What if you needed nothing else but your browser to work on a PC? For many Google fans who make use of services such as Drive, Gmail and Docs, this is already the case. Google's Chromebook notebooks takes this to the extreme, offering basically just the Chrome browser with no Windows OS running in the background, only its own lightweight Chrome OS.

Come all Google faithful

Acer's C720P is one of the very first ones to land in SA, and is a very solid offering for such a low-cost device. For R3 000 you do receive only an Intel Celeron processor and a plastic heavy notebook, but for the most part the Acer is solid, plus it provides a decent typing experience. There is virtually no boot-up time to speak of, and all you need to do is sign into your Google account and you're set. Certainly the biggest plus of the unit is its claimed 7.5 hour battery life. We watched two movies (decent sound quality) and still had enough battery power left on the unit to do some work. Don't expect much space for storage though since only a 32 GB SSD is on offer (more than most other Chromebooks). You do

however receive 100 GB storage space online on Drive (for two years), but do yourself a favour and buy a 32 GB SD card to pop in extra.

We were quite surprised that the 11.6" (1366x768) screen is actually touch enabled, although it could have done with better saturation and viewing angles. You'll also find a full sized HDMI port, plus a USB 3.0 and USB 2.0 port.

Google is your playground

There are numerous apps to download from the Chrome web store (not Google Play), but Skype unfortunately is not one of them. We also had trouble with a new Android phone not displaying when plugged in. Having said that, if you have a dependable internet connection and on the lookout for something a little bit different, then the Acer C720P is a good choice. For now it is only available in certain education sectors. [MJ] **ts**

ACER'S C720P IS ONE OF THE VERY FIRST ONES TO LAND IN SA, AND IS A VERY SOLID OFFERING FOR SUCH A LOW-COST DEVICE.



PRODUCTS OF 2014: STAFF PICKS

MIKE: JABRA SPORT WIRELESS+, BEYONDPOD APP

EDITOR

For me 2014 was more about the little things that made a difference. The BeyondPod Podcast Manager app (Android, bit.ly/byndpod) makes it easy to find and download my favourite podcasts, and is actually a player too. I usually listen to these while exercising, and if you, like me, find headphone wires a massive distraction, then the Jabra Sport Wireless+ headphones are a must. The Jabra's Bluetooth connection works without a hitch, plus they are comfortable enough to wear for long stretches. While these products aren't flawless, they sure made parts of 2014 a lot less frustrating.



RYAN: CANON EOS 7D MARK II

HEAD JOURNALIST

In a year that has been replete with some great tech, as of October my personal product of the year was a no-brainer – Canon's EOS 7D Mark II. I am sure I'm not the only one who has been hankering for the next step up in a rugged APS-C body with the 5D Mark III/EOS 1 D X focusing system and as many frames per second as possible. I also hoped the 7D Mark II would include the ISO range that makes me treasure the 5D Mark III, all while keeping the price within reach. To my delight, Canon delivered on all fronts, and finally put the 7D II rumours to rest this year.



ROBIN: HTC ONE (M8)

JOURNALIST

To pick one standout product in 2014 is a tall ask, but for me the HTC One (M8) proved particularly noteworthy. I first encountered it in Dubai, as HTC officially launched it for the MEA region, and when it finally landed on my review desk, it delivered a smartphone experience that's been hard to beat since. An achingly beautiful device, no other smartphone or tablet looks quite so good in my opinion, plus it's fast and responsive to boot. I'm not an Android user by trade, but if I had to pull the trigger and buy one, the One (M8) is first on my list. **ts**





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ASUS ROG G551

Asus have long been known for producing some beautiful and powerful gaming machines, and its G551 is no exception, but with a more budget-friendly pricetag.

Gaming notebooks are expected to look the part, with a bit (or a lot) of flair and style. The G551 certainly adheres to this. For starters, it offers a mix of black and red details - the case of the G551 has hints of red elements to spice it up, like the edges around the interior, the red bordered WASD keys and the ROG engraving on top of the keyboard. Additionally, the cooling system's fans are visible through the exhaust grill on the left of the unit. The ROG logo on the top, though backlit, is not overly bright as to distract if you're using the computer in a dim room. As for the build, the top of the notebook is covered in brushed aluminum, the interior is made from a single piece of metal, while the underside is made from plastic.

Power to the players

As for the specs, the machine doesn't disappoint. Onboard is an Intel Core i7-4710HQ processor @2.4 GHz, 8 GB of RAM, Nvidia GTX 860M graphics with 2 GB of video memory, and 1 TB HDD. This means that players should have few qualms about playing the likes of League of Legends, Dota 2, Heroes of The Storm, Call of Duty and FIFA 15 on the G551. Even more importantly, anticipated titles such as Far Cry 4, Battlefield Hardline or the fifth WoW expansion won't struggle either. When Evetech benchmarked 3D Mark 13, the notebook delivered some laudable results, scoring 98468 on Ice Storm, 15672 on Cloud Gate, 11231 on Sky Driver and 3594 on Fire Strike, with Nvidia's 333.37 driver installed.

Naturally, gaming is not the only use that the G551 can handle with ease. Along with speeding through any basic everyday tasks, it can also deal with demanding activities quite well, playing all sorts of video content, including 4K, and running software like the ever power hungry Photoshop or Eclipse. The 15.6" screen meanwhile, boasts a full HD resolution of 1920x1080 as well as anti-glare, and is complemented by a comfortable keyboard that features deep travel inside the frame and offers good feedback. Users can also adjust the brightness of the red backlight at any time for maximum visibility depending on the conditions of the environment in which they happen to be playing.

Not too hot to handle

One of the main issues confronting gaming machines typically though is heat buildup, as the processor and graphics card are pushed, often to their limits. On the G551, Asus has apparently taken pains to address this issue, and to ensure that their notebook remains a gaming machine rather than a portable oven. This has been accomplished via expertly-designed powerful thermal solution, while the notebook's exterior has been tested to ensure that its heat output is kept at a comfortable temperature level at all times for maximum stability.

Evetech believes this unit is aimed at any gamer looking to play the latest games on the go, or even as a work machine able to handle



multiple tasks. This without having to spend a fortune buying a bigger system. The Asus ROG G551 is currently available at Evetech.co.za for R16 000, including free delivery anywhere in South Africa. **ts**

EVETECH BELIEVES THIS UNIT IS AIMED AT ANY GAMER LOOKING TO PLAY THE LATEST GAMES ON THE GO, OR EVEN AS A WORK MACHINE ABLE TO HANDLE MULTIPLE TASKS.

SPECS



Processor

Intel Core i7 (4710HQ)
@ 2.4 GHz



Memory

8 GB



Graphics card

Nvidia GTX 860M with
2 GB memory



Screen resolution

1920x1080

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THE GADGET SHOP GIFT GUIDE

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The Mighty Wallet

(R170)

Buying gifts this holiday? Chances are a well-made wallet will come in handy. If you're looking for something that will stand the test of time, the Mighty Wallet is the way to go. Virtually indestructible, the Mighty Wallet is tear and water resistant thanks to the specialised Tyvek material it's made of. It also carries the distinct advantage of being eco-friendly, produced entirely from recycled materials. Not just good for the environment the Mighty Wallet range features a host of unique designs, with 50 original graphics to choose from. Retailing at the Gadget Shop for R170, the Mighty Wallet looks great and will last far longer than your New Year's resolution. Check them out here - bit.ly/1F2RKR8.



DJI Phantom Vision 2 Drone

(From R16 000)

Quadcopter sporting drones are all the rage among gadget obsessed geeks. One of the best options money can buy is the DJI Phantom Vision 2, which has a host of tricks to keep any drone pilot happy. Some may say it's on the slightly expensive side, but that's down to the built-in camera, great for some aerial photography. Added to this, the Phantom provides direct video downlink to one's iOS or Android device. The Phantom's remote gives pilots a 500m range of control and is capable of reaching altitudes at the 300m mark. Head to The Gadget Shop to take a gander - bit.ly/1F2TLgq.



Looflighter

(R600)

We may not have snowy winters, but our awesome summer weather means that many a braai can be had over the festive season. Essential to any good braai is fire, making the Looflighter a perfect weapon in the arsenal of any Braai Master. Capable of getting the fire for your braai up and running in only 60 seconds, the Looflighter is the worst thing to happen to firestarters since afternoon rain. Another smart little integration is the bottle opener found on the base of the Looflighter, so you can knock back a cold one as you watch the flames roar. Fancy a Looflighter, visit The Gadget Shop - bit.ly/1F2VthZ.



Self Stirring Mug

(R180)

In this age of automation, everything is made easier. Even the simple act of stirring has been taken care of, thanks to this Self Stirring Mug, available at The Gadget Shop. Whether it be your morning caffeine pick me up or warm cup of hot chocolate at night, the Self Stirring Mug could just become your new best friend. Designed with the ultra-lazy in mind, the Self Stirring Mug takes two AA batteries to work, and plays a major role in removing any risk of injury through excessive stirring. If you want an easier way to stir your favourite brew, click on the link to get one - bit.ly/1F2Y6QX.



Jabra Sport Pulse Wireless

(R2 400)

Once you've gorged yourself on all kinds of festive treats, the New Year will bring the chance to get back in fighting shape once again. Aiming to help you stay motivated is the newly launched Jabra Sport Pulse Wireless in-ear headphones. Not just designed to keep the high tempo tunes flowing during workouts, it also features a built-in heart rate monitor to check how effectively you're training. With a trusty companion fitness app as well, the Sport Pulse Wireless is a great tool to help keep on track with those New Year's resolutions. No price is available yet.



Seyvr Power Saver Wallet

(From R900)

Another wallet finds its way on our gift guide, this time round packing a bit more power than your conventional version. Its main differentiator is the slim 1400 mAh battery hidden within, fitted with a charging cable, as well as two different options for iOS and Android users alike. Not just about the battery, Seyvr's Power Saver Wallet can hold 6 cards, and has ample space for your cash and receipts. Great for when you're in a bind, the Power Saver Wallet is ideal for anyone who is constantly on their smartphone. **ts**



REVOLUTION ROLI

Roli is a very customizable planetary rover styled robot platform with 13 female EZ-Bit connections for additional EZ-Bits.



SEYVR

SEYVR is a slim and effective wallet with a built in 1400mAh Li-Po battery that can charge your phone anytime you need it. The battery is recharged using the supplied USB cable.



COOLUX Q6 WIRELESS PROJECTOR

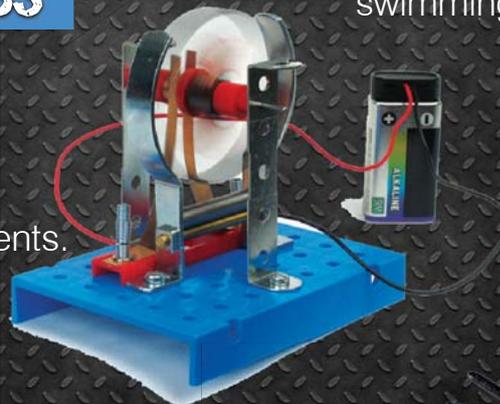
The Coolux Pocket Projector syncs with all your mobile devices and projects a crystal clear 1080p HD screen.



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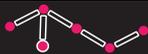
The BladeFish 5000 Sea Jet underwater scooter is perfect for scuba diving, snorkeling and swimming.



2014: THE BEST IN SCIENCE

Discoveries, ranging from the vast reaches of outer space to deep inside the human body, have again filled us with awe this year. We look back at a few highlights from the world of science in 2014.

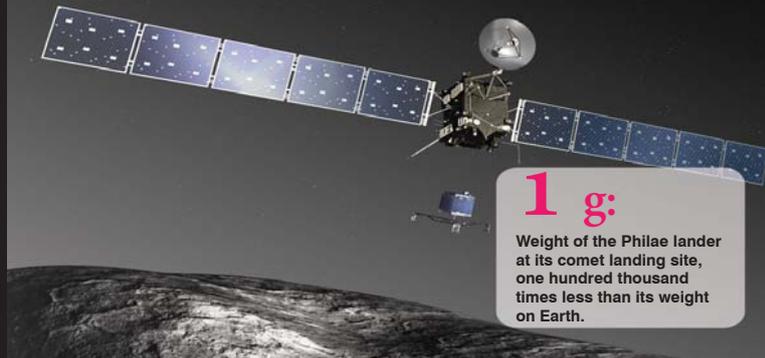
Rosetta mission



Last month, the Philae lander left its mothership *Rosetta*, 10 years after it started its historic comet chase. Despite the less-than-ideal hop onto comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko, 510 million kilometres from Earth, Philae streamed amazing images of the comet and a chemical analysis of a surface sample back to Earth before its power ran out. It's the first mission to orbit a comet and land a probe on its surface and it was planned to later accompany the cosmic icy dust cluster on its journey towards the Sun. As comets carry organic molecules, scientists hope that the Rosetta mission will help to unlock the mystery of life on Earth – just like its namesake stone helped to decipher the Egyptian hieroglyphs.

Source: bit.ly/1IE8jfc

Pic: Artist's impression of Rosetta and Philae at the comet. ESA - C. Carreau/ATG medialab



1 g:

Weight of the Philae lander at its comet landing site, one hundred thousand times less than its weight on Earth.

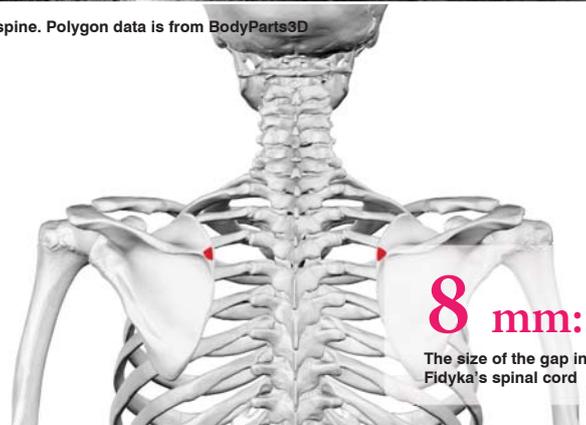
Paralysed man walks again



After nearly two years of being paralysed from the chest down, a Polish man, Darek Fidyka, experienced the joy of walking again. The feat comes after a groundbreaking nerve cell graft, in which specialised odour-sensing nerve cells were transplanted to the severed spinal cord. Doctors removed a cluster of nerve cells at the top of the nose, just under the brain, and grew the cells in culture. The cells were then injected directly above and below the spinal injury site. Four strips of nerve tissue from the ankle were used to bridge the gap in the spinal cord and served as a guide along which the new spinal nerves could grow. Six months after the transplant, Fidyka regained some feeling in his feet and was able to take his first tentative steps.

Source: bit.ly/1t3NzCY

Pic: Human spine. Polygon data is from BodyParts3D



8 mm:

The size of the gap in Fidyka's spinal cord

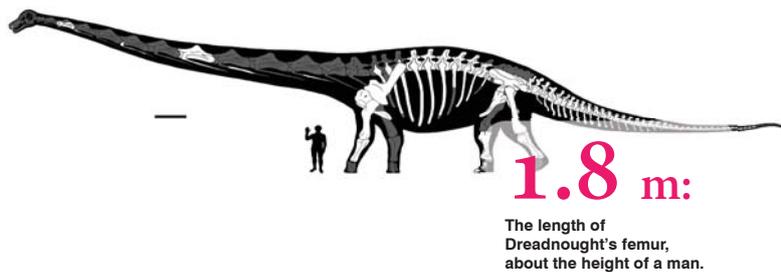
The biggest dinosaur ever



Earlier this year, scientists described *Dreadnoughtus schrani*, a massive plant-eating Titanosaur that lived about 77 million years ago – the biggest dinosaur ever. The description came after almost 10 years' excavation and analysis of the pristinely preserved skeleton from Patagonia, Argentina. From the bones of the nearly complete skeleton scientists estimated that Dreadnought tipped the scales at 59 tonnes and was about 26 m long, its tail alone whipping about at just over 9 m. The discovery will help us to understand more about the biology of massive land animals and could give insight into how physiological constraints influence the upper size limit of life on land.

Source: bit.ly/1IK3ncJ

Pic: The reconstructed skeleton and body silhouette of Dreadnoughtus. Lacovara Lab, Drexel University



1.8 m:

The length of Dreadnought's femur, about the height of a man.

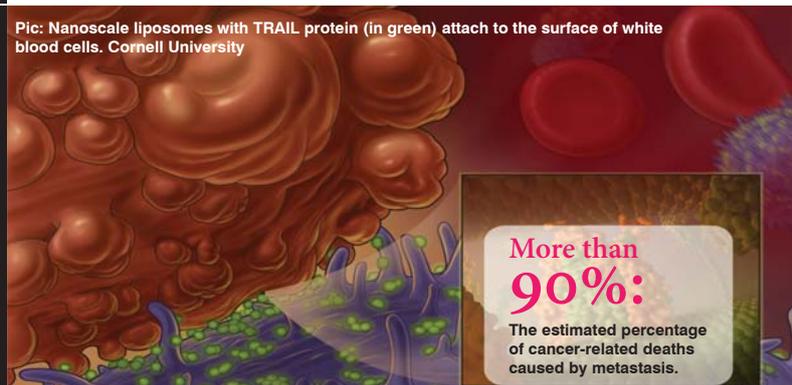
Killing cancer cells



Once cancer cells enter the bloodstream and spread unimpeded through the body, there's little we can do to stop their onslaught. But science is fighting back – and may well be getting the upper hand. In a study earlier this year, scientists reported developing a cancer-destroying carrier coated with two proteins, which, in theory, can be released directly into a patient's bloodstream. One protein binds to the surface of white blood cells, while the other binds briefly to a cancer cell, activates that cell's self-destruct mechanism and then disengages safely to move on to its next target. The remarkable success achieved in the lab with human blood samples is encouraging and scientists hope that they will soon be able to test the concept in live animal models and later also in clinical trials.

Source: bit.ly/1aYF3Zp

Pic: Nanoscale liposomes with TRAIL protein (in green) attach to the surface of white blood cells. Cornell University



More than 90%:

The estimated percentage of cancer-related deaths caused by metastasis.



Pic: The biodegradable battery dissolves after three weeks in water. Univ. Illinois

Three weeks:

How long it takes for the battery to dissolve completely in the body.

A biodegradable battery



A battery that dissolves when its work is done sounds like something from a sci-fi plot. But it's here. In March, scientists announced that they have developed a fully biodegradable battery, which will come in handy in medical implants that need their own power source. The battery is made up of a magnesium foil anode, a cathode of iron, molybdenum or tungsten, and a phosphate-buffered saline solution as electrolyte, all held nicely together in a biopolymer casing. Results showed that a 0.25 cm² battery of this configuration can power a wireless implantable sensor reliably for about a day. Afterwards the components steadily dissolve in body fluid as biocompatible ions.

Source: bit.ly/1ixiMz

Pic: Artist depiction of HIV. Shutterstock

9709:

The number of nucleotides in the HIV genome

Getting rid of HIV



HIV cunningly creates a replication factory by inserting itself into the host cell's DNA – one of the reasons why it's so darn difficult to get rid of the virus. In July, Temple University School of Medicine researchers announced that they have developed a molecular mechanism to tackle the problem right at its root. They combined a DNA-cutting enzyme with a genetically engineered strand of RNA that hones in on the viral genome in a host cell. Once the RNA scout has latched onto the two ends of the viral gene sequence, the cutting enzyme snips it out. The cell's own gene repair mechanism then kicks into gear to tie the two pieces of host DNA together again. It is hoped that the results may contribute to the development of an effective HIV vaccine in future.

Source: bit.ly/Uyle9d

Pic: Two Majorana fermions (orange balls) are formed at the end of the nanowire. TU Delft 2012

-272 °C:

The temperature to which the superconducting wire was cooled

Fermions observed for the first time



Subatomic particles that have theoretically been predicted to exist more than 75 years ago were observed for the first time this year. These so-called Majorana fermions are electrically neutral subatomic particles that can simultaneously be matter and antimatter. Scientists created a superconducting nanowire by depositing iron onto an ultrapure lead crystal, cooled it to just above absolute zero and then scrutinised it under a powerful microscope. The resulting image showed the predicted electrical signal, which confirms that these particles can indeed exist given the right conditions. The finding brings us one step closer to creating materials capable of quantum computing.

Source: bit.ly/1t1h7wu

Pic: The induced thymic epithelial cells transplanted on the mouse kidney is shown in blue. www.thymistem.org

About 30 g

The average weight of the human thymus at puberty; at age 75 it weighs only 6 g.

A functional organ grown from cells



This year also saw the first fully functional organ grown from lab cells in a live animal. Scientists from the University of Edinburgh announced in August that they had reprogrammed fibroblasts – a type of connective tissue cell – from a mouse embryo to become specialised thymus cells, which play an important role in immune function. These cells were then transplanted into a mouse and after a while a complete thymus organ developed at the site of transplantation. The discovery offers hope of developing a treatment approach for people with weakened immune systems or non-functional thymus organs. **ts**

Source: bit.ly/1tBPqxa

MEGASTORE

Mega Deals



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WE DELIVER



TOP 5 CONCEPT CARS OF 2014

Awesome eye-candy with some hot tech to boot, concept cars provide a peek into the future. Here are five that piqued our interest during the latter half of 2014.

Quant E-Sportlimousine Concept

The world of concept cars seems a natural fit for showcasing innovative designs for alternative energy vehicles. One company making inroads in the alternative energy field, is Germany company Quant, with its E-Sportlimousine running four separate motors, serving as a quasi four-wheel-drive system. The car's exterior is most notably defined by its sweeping lines and gill-like air intakes found on the front-end. Along with this are two gullwing style doors that open vertically, providing the E-Sportlimousine with an added element of distinctiveness.

Switching back to its one-of-a-kind engine, it generates a mammoth 680 kW, resulting in a top speed of close to 380 km/h. Not just fast, it also has great range, estimated at 644 kilometres in-between charges. Great to look at, the E-Sportlimousine provides a vision of what the future of motoring could be.



Infiniti Q80 Inspiration

No matter what angle you find yourself looking at US-based manufacturer Infiniti's Q80 Inspiration, it's absolutely captivating. Perhaps even more so when viewed front on, with its distinctive grille and headlight cluster proving particularly handsome. Added to this, the Q80's grille contains active shutters that open and close depending on driving speed in order to cool down the engine.

Other design enhancements include LED lighting littered throughout the car to further add to its futuristic look, as well as a Heads-Up Display (HUD). The HUD will come in handy when viewing one's speed, courtesy of a 3.0 litre twin-turbocharged V6 engine that Infiniti has opted for.

According to Infiniti, this engine produces 410 kW of power and 750 Nm of torque, culminating in a sub 4 second 0-100 km/h time to put any supercar on edge. Still in the prototype phase, we hope Infiniti bites the bullet and puts the Q80 Inspiration into production.



◀ Mini Superleggera Vision

Since its revival under BMW, Mini has been pushing the boundaries as far as how the company can re-imagine the iconic Mini shape. To that end, the Superleggera Vision was debuted earlier in the year at the Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este. The annual showcase event proved quite apt, as the Superleggera Vision draws inspiration from its traditional British roots, mixed with some Italian flair to create a Mini-esque interpretation of the conventional two-seater convertible.

Even though it offers up a glimpse into Mini's future, the Superleggera Vision has some old-school sensibility to it, with lines and an overall shape reminiscent of vintage Alfa Romeo sports cars. At this stage, little is known about the Superleggera Vision's electric-powered drivetrain. Mini has however disclosed that its bodywork is all hand-shaped, with the interior combining rich leather, refined aluminium accents and black chrome to merge the vintage looks with a modern feel.



◀ Citroën Divine DS Concept

One could easily mistake the Divine DS Concept as being the latest venture from some international fashion label, with its diamondesque front grille and unique reptilian scale-like roof looking far different from any other concept car we've seen in quite some time. It is however the work of French manufacturer Citroën, which debuted this effort at the Paris Motor Show.

It's not just the body of Citroën's Divine DS that's eye-catching, the interior too is equally radical, resembling the inside of an alien spacecraft. One of its key features is an in-cabin interactive display, which also doubles as a rear-view mirror, as the mesh design of the roof has no rear window to speak of.

On the more practical side of things, Citroën has integrated the 1.6 litre turbocharged engine found in Peugeot's RCZ sports car, producing 201 kW and 330 Nm of torque. As great as the Divine DS would be to see on the road, it probably won't make it. Instead, Citroën will be incorporating specific elements of its design into a range of Citroën's upcoming vehicles.



Nissan Kicks ▶

The Kicks concept serves as Nissan's updated interpretation of what an urban crossover vehicle can be. Nissan showcased the Kicks concept at this year's Sao Paulo International Motor Show, with it having the potential to become exclusively designed for the Brazilian market. Nissan's team were highly inspired by the Brazilian metropole, which features a diverse and dynamic mix of urban sprawls with tight spaces, as well as open expanses to explore. As such, a vehicle capable of handling all this was born, in the form of the Kicks.

Much like the Mini Superleggera Vision, engine details remain a mystery, but experts expect the Kicks to feature a similar setup to the Nissan Qashqai, with an estimated 0-100 km/h time of 8.2 seconds and a heavy focus on fuel efficiency. [RLC] **ts**



Summer Style

by Mynhardt van Pletsen

WITH HOLIDAY VIBES ALL AROUND, THE STRESS OF THE OLD YEAR IS SLOWLY DISSIPATING. YOUR WARDROBE SHOULD REFLECT THIS MORE RELAXED ATTITUDE, AND WE'VE GOT A FEW SUGGESTIONS THAT SHOULD MAKE THIS SUMMER GOLDEN.

Printed vest. R110, Pick & Pay Clothing.



BEACH BODY

As with all stylistic expressions, diversity is key. Choose a collection that can instantly be dressed up or down as the setting dictates. As far as your emerging upper body tone is concerned, show it off with the combination of boldly printed vests and understatedly coloured golf shirts. With these re-incarnated versions of the traditional t-shirt, you can instantly go from beach ready to boyfriend material.

TRAILER TRUNKS

Mix and match a proper quick-drying boardshort, informal knee-length chino, and the überhip cuffed jogger longs for a great selection to choose from. This will keep you in play whether you're going for a dip with a local south coast beach babe, treating her to a movie on a cloudy day, or hanging with her friends at a late night beach bonfire.

SOLE CONNECTION

Make sure you're shod in something that's both comfy and totes appropes. Switch between a colorful pair of fabric lace ups and good quality leather thongs, for next level laidback status.

THE OTHER STUFF

Part of being properly kitted out for the holidays means having the ability to rock just the right amount of mancesories. The first summer essential that immediately comes to mind, is a handy water bottle for, uhm, water, and whatever else nails your thirst. Secondly, make sure you have a handy brobag that can seamlessly integrate into the summer swing of things. The backpack is making a vicious comeback, we hear. **ts**



Phresh water bottle. R112, Cotton On.

Printed board shorts. R120, RED, Mr Price.





Aspy backpack.
R450, Cotton On.



Navy and Burgundy
bucket hat, R250,
Topman.



Cuffed fleece joggers.
R120, RT, Mr Price.



Ray-Ban Clubmaster
sunglasses, R1 500,
Sunglass Hut.



Abraided chino shorts.
R150, RT, Mr Price.

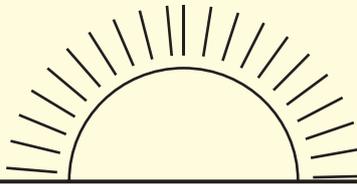
Navy denim collar golfer.
R280, Markhams.



Tate thongs. R600,
Trenery, Woolworths.

Fabric lace up shoes.
R600, Studio W,
Woolworths.





(NOT) STARING AT THE SUN

Not keeping your eyes protected might eventually result in a definitive rock-hard Clint Eastwood glare, but it can also mean that you won't see that piece of debris rushing towards you on the N1. By the way, did we mention that the right set of sunnies will keep you looking smashing too?

1 If you believe Tom Cruise was cheated out of an Oscar for his brilliant character interpretation in the 1986 hit *Top Gun*, make sure you're flying high this summer with Ray-Ban's iconic Aviators. [R2 100, Eye wearSA]



2 Oakley remains the brand of choice for all eyewear sporting, active lifestyle leading, super-fans of summer. Get either the lifestyle orientated Holbrook [R1 390, Sunglass Hut] or the hardcore athletic Radarlock Path [R4 190, Sunglass Hut].



3 If you want to don a more relaxed and funky face style, why not opt for the playful Ferris Sunnies. They are affordable enough to get one in every colour, so you can coordinate with your new smartphone cover. [R168, Cotton On]



4 Bordering on the classic side of things, any sufficiently shaded metal rimmed sunglasses will make you look the business, whether you're power-lunching or pencil-pushing. [R225, Woolworths]

5 Finally, not all glasses were made to up your level of cool. Some are functional as well. Luckily, these beautiful two-tone reading glasses don't have to compromise on either. [R120, Woolworths] **ts**



CAD HOUSE REVEALING THE UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF 3D PRINTING

The advent of 3D printing has brought the importance of design and creativity into sharper focus in recent years. Doing their part is CAD House, one of SA's leading 3D printing solution specialists.

Having evolved from a trendy fad into a major industry in only a few short years, the world of 3D printing holds undoubted potential. Hoping to educate and enlighten is CAD House, a local 3D printing solution specialist which advocate the application of their products in a variety of ways.

Hive of activity

Walk into CAD House's Centurion offices, and you'll be greeted by all manner of manufactured object, while the gentle hum of 3D printers great and small resonate in the background. It's a buzzing hive of activity, particularly as a result of the intrigued sense of frenzy that 3D printers seem to naturally evoke. "3D printing is growing day by day and they say it's going to be as big as the internet," notes Michael Wall, GM at CAD House, on the growth of the 3D printing industry. While initially one might think that 3D printers are good for only creating trinkets alone, there's a good case to be made that they are a supplementary tool for one's imagination. Wall believes this because 3D printing "gives you the freedom to create and make anything you can think of."

Reaching out

The ability to create anything may seem like a lofty claim, but judging on the variety of products we saw on display, it seems their 3D printers can be pushed as far as the designer's imagination. Examples of these applications that Wall is starting to see locally even extend to the medical field, with doctors using scans to create 3D models of patients' internal injuries in order to have a better idea of how to perform before surgery. Students at the Central University of Technology are using a

specialised 3D printer to construct titanium jawbones for those who have suffered serious injury. Laurie de Beer, marketing manager at CAD House enthusiastically told us about their rural school and community outreach efforts, 3D printing everyday objects that residents in these areas find hard to come by.

As far as their more commercial endeavours go, CAD House has partnered with 3D Systems, which just so happen to be the largest producer of 3D solutions worldwide. As a result they have a number of consumer and industrial printers available. It's not just printers alone either, with specialised 3D scanners and software forming part of their product range as well, all of which we were fortunate enough to see in action at this year's rAge expo. Wall says the interest from rAge attendees was fantastic, many of whom were impressed by the potential of 3D printing.

Enhancing creativity

We can only see this market growing in years to come, with the potential value that 3D printing holds for entrepreneurs and educators alike, yet to be fully realised. For anyone with creative talent, wishing to breathe some tangible life into their ideas or concepts, 3D printing can play a vital role. For more info on CAD House and 3D printing, head to www.cad-house.co.za or call them on 012-654-0559. **ts**

"3D PRINTING IS GOING TO GROW DAY BY DAY AND THEY SAY IT'S GOING TO BE AS BIG AS THE INTERNET."



TOP 5 COMICS OF 2014

Our comic book guru Moray Rhoda believes it would have been too easy to include *Saga* or *The Walking Dead* on this list or to sing the praises of *Deadly Class* again. Instead he picked some books that truly surprised him with their level of art and storytelling.

RAT QUEENS IMAGE

If you like Role Playing Games, gut-wrenching action and irreverent humour then this book is for you. The *Rat Queens* are a group of all-female fantasy world adventurers, but that is where any derivative comparisons to standard fantasy fare ceases. Written with a modern sensibility, it is equal parts action adventure quest and the developing relationship between best friends. Humour throughout is spot-on and the mysteries the *Rat Queens* have to unravel are tightly plotted to keep the reader guessing. Swearwords are used liberally throughout and some sexual situations are alluded to, so possibly not the best book for kids.

AFTERLIFE WITH ARCHIE ARCHIE COMICS

Everybody knows Archie, Jughead and the Riverdale teens, but in this book the entire idyll has been turned upside down as hordes of undead roam the streets. More than just another cash grab of the popular zombie genre, it is a textbook tale of terror and how easily disaster can derail modern life. Great writing and characterisation elevates the normally stereotypical (jock, nerd, cheerleader, etc.) characters to people that have real and sometimes deeply disturbing motivations and backgrounds. The brooding artwork with spots of high contrast colours by Franco Villa perfectly complements the horror movie feel of the book.

STRONG FEMALE PROTAGONIST TOP SHELF

At first glance this might seem an unlikely choice for this list, but *SFP* has some of the best-written female (and male) characters in comics and also the most innovative approaches to superhero comics to date. Alison is the strongest superhero in her world, but the story follows her decision to live a normal, non-heroic student's life. Of course her past life (and super-powered villains) interfere, but at its core this is the story of an extraordinary girl finding her place in the world. Read it online at www.strongfemaleprotagonist.com.

BATMAN ZERO YEAR: DARK CITY DC

Beautifully illustrated and well-written, *Dark City* is a perfect Batman tale, focusing on all the elements that make the character iconic, including mysterious villains with convoluted master plans and brutal violence. Several homages to great *Batman* stories of the past are also sprinkled throughout. The story cleverly explores the relationships Batman has with Alfred, Jim Gordon, the police and the citizens of Gotham, as well as the dark forces that drive Bruce Wayne. Batman has to deal with the psychotic Dr Death, try to foil the Riddler's plot and avoid being killed by the corrupt Gotham police department.

HAWKEYE MARVEL

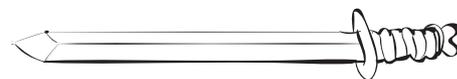
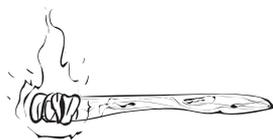
2014 saw some of the best stories coming from Fraction and Aja for their *Hawkeye* series. It follows the "normal" life adventures of Clint Barton, when he's not on Avengers duty as Hawkeye. The stories are more grounded, with Russian tracksuit mafia being as big a nemesis as established villains like the Kingpin. What sets the book apart is the perfect synergy between writer and artist: frames and pages are written and designed to create breathtaking layouts whether it is action sequences or quieter character moments. Hawkguy (as one of his neighbours calls him) is a deeply flawed, extremely human character who makes some morally ambiguous decisions based on his own code of right and wrong, in the process redefining what a hero actually is. **ts**



THE COMIC BOOK GUYS

Joe Daly is certainly one of our favourite local comic book talents, with the strangeness associated with his work making for some awesome reading.

JOE DALY



TechSmart (TS): Please provide a brief description of yourself and the work/titles you've been responsible for.

Joe Daly (JD): I was born in London 35 years ago, but I grew up (since the age of two) in Cape Town, South Africa. I studied film animation for two years at college and now I'm making comics and graphic novels. My published books are *Scrublands*, *The Red Monkey Double Happiness Book*, and the *Dungeon Quest* series, which include three volumes so far.

TS: Your comics are not the usual superhero fare that people might be used to. Nor is the drawing style. Do you find that some traditionalists find it difficult to relate to your work?

JD: I'm not sure how some traditionalists relate to my work, I don't have all the data on that. Since my style in some ways relates to old comics like *Tintin*, *Dick Tracy* and others, I suggest some comic book traditionalists can relate well to my work. I was influenced by superhero comics as well as underground comics. I suggest that *Dungeon Quest* bridges the world of underground comics and mainstream superhero comics quite well, although some people might not always be sure of what I'm doing.

TS: What would you say are the influences behind your work?

JD: I try to pull techniques and ideas that are useful from as wide a field in comics as is available to me, so earlier on I looked at French and Belgian comics like *Tintin*, American superhero comics like *Spiderman* and *Batman*, British comics like *2000 AD* as well as British children's comics, like *The Beano*. Later on I got into alternative and underground comics, work by people like Daniel Clowes and Robert Crumb, I also enjoy old timey comics like *Krazy Kat*, *Dick Tracy*, *Popeye*, *Little Nemo in Slumberland* and others.

TS: How did you develop your own style?

JD: I experimented over many years trying to draw in all the styles I found appealing, and then started to refine what styles worked best for me. I also realised that perhaps I wasn't amongst the best technical draftsman in the world, which I've tried to use to my advantage. I will sometimes emphasize things that look wrong or awkward instead of trying to mask them. This has generally worked to my advantage because it gives my work a particular character and that awkward tension between right drawing and wrong drawing is perhaps what makes it interesting to look at.

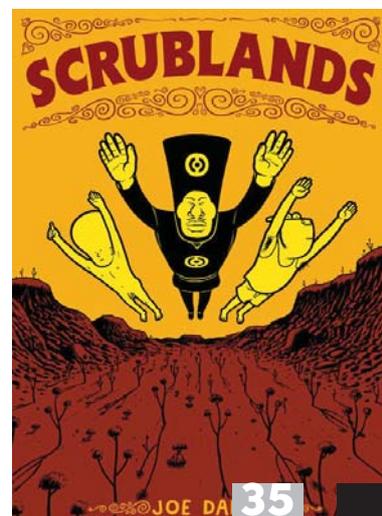
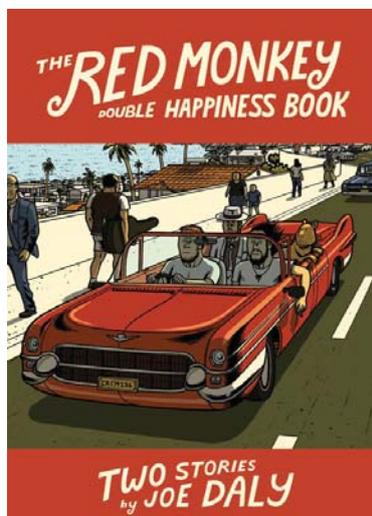
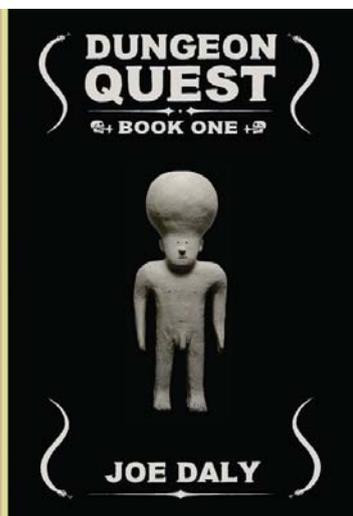
TS: Favourite publisher?

JD: I've have two publishers I've been predominantly working with, Fantagraphics Books in the U.S.A and L'Association in France, and I admire and appreciate both of them very much, and they've published all my work, so in a naturalistic sense, they're both my favourites. If I had to pick a publisher I haven't worked with it might just be Drawn and Quarterly in Canada.

TS: What would be the next step in your comic book career?

JD: My next step now is to finish my current long form comic, *Highbone Theatre*, and get the book out. I've been serialising the work first as a free to read webcomic (bit.ly/highboned), which has been a recent experiment for me. After *Highbone Theatre* is done I hope to be able to work on *Dungeon Quest Book Four*. **ts**

Images courtesy of Joe Daly. Find more of Joe here: bit.ly/highboned



Top 5 MOVIES OF 2014

With only December standing in the way of 2015, movie fundi Spring rounds-up the best releases of 2014.

Boyhood ✖

Richard Linklater's *Boyhood* is a true original masterpiece and something never before witnessed at the cinema. Filmed over 13 years, the film functions as a docudrama time capsule, tracking the life journey of a character and actor.

Linklater's intuition and the cast's performances are enhanced by the progressive aging of the actors and the natural environment they find themselves in. We bear witness to a "home video" adaptation that resonates so strongly that we hardly noticed the 3-hour run time. *Boyhood* cements Linklater as a visionary director and Ellar Coltrane as a (former) child star.

IT'S SO GOOD YOU'LL... FEEL LIKE YOU KNOW THESE PEOPLE WHEN THE CREDITS ROLL.



Don't WING it, SPLING it!

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The Lego Movie ✦

"Everything is AWESOME." The brainwashing refrain from *The Lego Movie* theme song will stay with you for hours if not days. Undoubtedly, one of 2014's biggest surprises, we watched as what could have been a feature length toy commercial was transformed into an incredibly funny and imaginative piece of pop culture art for all ages.

Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs writer-directors, Phil Lord and Christopher Miller made the blend of laugh-a-minute inside jokes, a stellar comic cast and curious "stop-motion" animation seem effortless. How can you resist an entertaining, hilarious animated adventure comedy that combines *The Matrix*, *Back to the Future* and *Wreck-It Ralph*?

IT'S SO GOOD YOU'LL... CONSIDER BECOMING A PARENT JUST TO PLAY WITH LEGO AGAIN.



Edge of Tomorrow ✦

Edge of Tomorrow met and exceeded our expectations. This futuristic military thriller stars Tom Cruise and dials into a *Source Code* predicament as Major William Cage becomes locked in a cycle, appearing at a futuristic army base and dying on a battlefield again and again.

Edge of Tomorrow is fresh, funny and wildly entertaining, despite being "recycled" from a Japanese light novel, *All You Need Is Kill*. Tom Cruise is in fighting form, Emily Blunt kicks ass and director Doug Liman has balanced the dopamine-inducing insurgent action and "Live, Die, Repeat." dark comedy to create a fast-paced, intelligent and thought-provoking sci-fi thriller.

IT'S SO GOOD YOU'LL... FORGIVE TOM CRUISE FOR HIS REAL-LIFE ECCENTRICITIES.



Guardians of the Galaxy ✦

James Gunn blew our minds with *Guardians of the Galaxy*, a superhero sci-fi comedy that captured the imagination, lived up to the "Space Avengers" hype and released its very own mix tape. While it starts off slow, *Guardians of the Galaxy's* biggest asset is its tone, delivering a mix of nostalgia and laugh-out-loud comedy with plenty of fun and wink-wink action.

Just like the mischievous Starlord, it never takes itself too seriously and gives the audience permission to be entertained by the A-Team style camaraderie and *The Fifth Element* action-comedy, all wrapped-up in an epic *Star Wars* sized adventure.

IT'S SO GOOD YOU'LL... FORGET ABOUT THE AVENGERS, AT LEAST UNTIL AGE OF ULTRON.



X-Men: Days of Future Past ✦

X-Men: Days of Future Past is a well-balanced, smart and imaginative sequel that builds on the franchise's already solid foundations. Bryan Singer returns to harness a stellar cast, refreshes our views on the most fascinating X-Men and transplants us in an unplugged time in history.

The character-driven time warp features solid performances from a phenomenally cool cast, dazzling special effects, quick pacing and taut direction on the back of an entertaining thrill ride. The real superpower is Singer's direction, managing to bridge the old and the new in a fresh, rich, layered, varied, epic and compelling time travel sequel. **ts**

IT'S SO GOOD YOU'LL... TRY AND FIGURE OUT HOW TO SEQUENCE AN X-MEN MARATHON.

✦ **Close but no Doughnut!**

Captain America: The Winter Solider, How to Train Your Dragon 2, Belle, Locke, Hard to Get, Wish I Was Here and Calvary.

NEW

CINEMA RELEASES



The Hobbit: Battle of the Five Armies (12 Dec)

After two Middle-of-the-Earth chapters, Peter Jackson has decided to bring *The Hobbit Trilogy* to a grand conclusion with a war that could, but probably won't, obliterate J.R.R. Tolkien's fantasy kingdom. While almost

everyone is grateful they didn't split the final chapter into Part I & II, *Battle of the Five Armies* is a much anticipated release.

Ian McKellen, Martin Freeman and Richard Armitage continue their quest as Jackson welcomes old and new faces back for one long and epic battle. Let's just hope that whatever the outcome, Jackson leave us with fond memories of Middle Earth.



John Wick (19 Dec)

Is Keanu Reeves cool? While this question will divide audiences, after watching his latest explosive, gun-blazing, car-chase action thriller, your answer will probably tilt in his

favour. *The Matrix* and *Speed* star returns to play an ex-hitman who is brought out of retirement to track down gangsters and exact revenge. Sounds familiar?

It's become a well-worn path since *Taken*, but *John Wick* is stylish, thrilling and visually dynamic enough to compel audiences with a similar offering for those who enjoyed Denzel Washington in *The Equaliser*. *John Wick*'s co-directors come from a stunt background, so expect hard-edged, relentless b-movie action fun.



Exodus: Gods and Kings (26 Dec)

After *Noah* and *The Bible* series, it seems there's a renewed interest in Biblical epics with a *Ben Hur* remake underway and now *Exodus: Gods and Kings*. Christian

Bale stars as Moses, bringing his considerable dramatic weight and cult following to one of the most miraculous stories in the Bible.

Exodus: Gods and Kings pits brother against brother as Moses faces off against Rhamses, played by *Warrior*'s Joel Edgerton. Ridley Scott has an interest in historical epics, having directed *Gladiator* and *Robin Hood*, and has envisaged a much more war-like Moses in this re-imagining, complete with plagues and the parting of the Red Sea.



Big Hero 6 (26 Dec)

Disney acquired Marvel Entertainment for \$4.24 billion in 2009, so it was only a matter of time before they adapted *Big Hero 6*, one of Marvel's most bizarre comics. The story centres

around a special bond between Baymax, a plus-size inflatable robot, and young prodigy Hiro, who form a team of hi-tech heroes.

While there are some strong parallels with *Wreck-It Ralph*, this action-packed comedy adventure will generate its own league of new fans. Baymax is lovable and bound to become a crowd favourite with a steady stream of inflatable jokes. While funny and imaginatively animated, it's also genuinely heart-warming.



The Riot Club (26 Dec)

Every now and then, a movie about spoilt rotten rich kids captures our attention. Somewhere between *Cruel Intentions* and *The Skulls* lies a film about two first-year Oxford University students who join The

Riot Club, a long established elite drinking club priding itself on a hedonistic money-can-buy-you-anything philosophy.

The Riot Club features a talented band of up-and-coming actors. While it seems destined for the exploitative shock value of *A Clockwork Orange*, this dark and somewhat debauched drama and thriller doesn't go all the way. It all actually makes sense when you consider director Lone Scherfig's previous dramas are *An Education* and *One Day*.

MOVIE NEWS



Warcraft is Coming...

Hollywood is expecting grand things from 2016, and one such great expectation is Duncan Jones' *Warcraft*. The much anticipated adaptation of the ever-popular video

game may just do enough to tear WoW gamers away from their monitors. Jones is the man behind the critically acclaimed *Moon* and *Source Code*, and will be working with the likes of Dominic Cooper, Toby Kebbell, Ben Foster and Paula Patton to bring this epic medieval fantasy adventure to life.



Suicide Squad eyes its Joker and Harley Quinn

DC's *Suicide Squad* has been scheduled for 2016 and is set to be directed by David Ayer, whose credits include *End of Watch* and *Fury*. The only concern is screenwriter Justin Marks, whose

tried-and-tested feature screenplay is the underwhelming *Street Fighter: The Legend of Chun Li*. More promising news is that Jared Leto is circling the role of The Joker and *The Wolf of Wall Street*'s drop dead gorgeous Margot Robbie has been confirmed as the crazy Harley Quinn. We hope *Suicide Squad* is more killer than filler. **ts**

Merry Christmas

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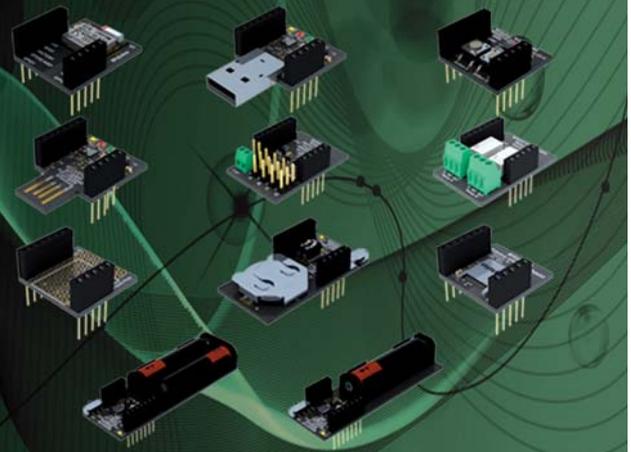
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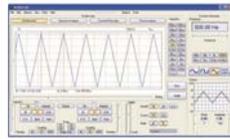


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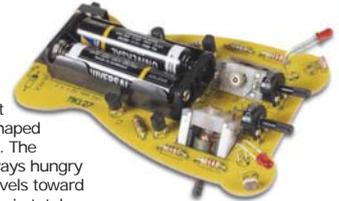
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SID MEIER'S CIVILIZATION BEYOND EARTH

3,2,1... Lift-off! The expansion into space is maybe just what the Civ franchise needs.



Sid Meier's Civilization franchise has for years served as a cornerstone of the turn-based RTS community, with developers Firaxis' Civilization V breathing much needed new life into the series.

Set a few hundred years in the future, Beyond Earth sees humanity forced to abandon Earth and seek a new home among the stars. Instead of controlling a traditional historic civilization, the player is tasked with establishing and leading one of several new human colonies on an alien world. This futuristic premise allows the game to tell new stories, and utilise new technologies unrestricted by earthly history.

Gameplay

While a number of radical ideas were discussed for Beyond Earth, the truth is the game isn't much different from Civ V. All the aspects loved by fans are here, complete with turn-based gameplay, tile-based building/movement, and in-depth research and diplomacy systems. Civ fans will thus find themselves instantly at home with the control scheme and layout, but gamers who were expecting an entirely different experience may be somewhat let down.

The research systems have been expanded, but the most noticeable gameplay change is the ability to deploy orbital units. A separate "orbital view" is available where players can track any deployed satellites they may have available. Orbital units can serve both civilian functions (solar energy for example), or military ones (orbital bombardments and such).

A day in the life

While Beyond Earth doesn't necessarily go far beyond anything we've



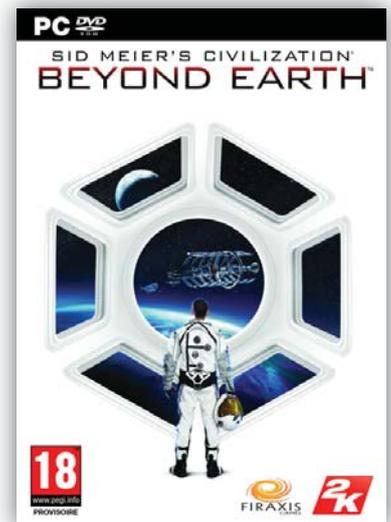
seen before, the game is still immensely enjoyable and will make an excellent addition to any RTS fans' collection. The game simply succeeds in keeping you hooked and almost forces you to click that 'end turn' button just one more time.

To give you an idea of the kinds of decisions an extra-terrestrial commander needs to make, let's take a look at a turn in the life of General Vadim Kozlov of the Slavic Federation (that's us). To start things off, our advisor informed us that one of our

satellites would be de-orbiting soon, and constructing a replacement might be a good idea. Noted. Next, one of our frigates engaged a massive alien tentacle monster that had been terrorizing our oceanic trade routes for some time. Nice. After dealing with the threat we received a message from a competing colonist telling us to, "Stop looting alien artifacts on my borders." Ignored. After checking our production queues, we noted a few Polystralian missile rovers creeping along our borders (damn space Aussies), and decided to dispatch some units to keep an eye on them. After finishing construction on a Xenomass Well, we clicked 'end turn' and sat back for a sip of tea.

So buy?

If you're a fan of the Civ style then you'll love Beyond Earth, but if you're looking for something new, or something ground-breaking then you aren't going to find it here. The gameplay is basically identical to Civ V, some might even go as far to call it a "sci-fi re-skin" instead of a new game. But, while Beyond Earth doesn't signify a revolution in Civ games, it gets the tried-and-tested recipe just right. [JK] **ts**



WHILE BEYOND EARTH DOESN'T SIGNIFY A REVOLUTION IN CIV GAMES, IT GETS THE TRIED-AND-TESTED RECIPE JUST RIGHT.

THE EVIL WITHIN™



FIRST PERSON SHOOTERS MAY DOMINATE THIS SEASON, BUT SCARILY GOOD SURVIVAL HORROR IS ALSO ALIVE, WELL AND CAPABLE OF PROVOKING PLENTY OF CHILLS. CASE IN POINT IS THE EXCELLENT THE EVIL WITHIN.

There are two kinds of really good survival horror – those that start off peacefully and steadily build up the suspense as things start going wrong, and those that throw you headlong into a nightmare and task you with surviving long enough to escape it. While *Alien Isolation* could claim to be the former, *The Evil Within* is quite easily the latter.

In the first fifteen minutes, you encounter at least five standard tropes of horror, including a derelict mental hospital, chainsaw wielding maniacs, a disturbingly large man doing unspeakable things to human bodies, oodles of blood, and, if that wasn't enough, an inexplicable and malevolent supernatural

force. After that, things start getting really disturbing....

A bad day begins

However, a major part of the game revolves around uncovering for yourself what those events really are, and what led to the horrific predicament you find yourself in. Thus, in the interest of remaining spoiler free, your troubles really start when you, playing as Detective Sebastian Castellanos, along with two other detectives, answer an emergency call from Beacon Mental Hospital reporting a mass murder. This turns out to be a big mistake, because let's just say this case makes the worst ever encountered by the CSI team look like a white picnic.

While the course of the game sees you acquiring some useful weapons to deal with the monstrosities within the asylum's walls (such as the aptly named Agony Crossbow), to start with at least, Castellanos and co are wholly unprepared for what awaits. Sneaking and distracting murderous foes with bottles (reminiscent of *The Last of Us*) become the order of the day, and the ever handy locker to hide in proves just as essential on Earth as it is in space on a certain space station you may have visited recently. Additionally, your ammo is limited, meaning you have to choose your targets carefully; you simply cannot adopt a spray and pray approach.

Be warned

True to traditional survival horror fare, *The Evil Within* is certainly not a cakewalk – if anything, you are often outmatched and carelessness is all too often 'rewarded' with a sudden and gruesome death. This meant that, much like pure stealth titles, the game could take on a



more ponderous pace at times; no doubt by design, as it gives the suspense time to build and heightens your anxiety.

The Evil Within can stand very proudly amongst the likes of *Silent Hill* and the early *Resident Evil* games, but it also reminded us a little at times of some of our favourite horror movies as well (strangely enough, *The Ring* came to mind while we were playing). It's gruesome, unsettling and eerily compelling all at once; in the way that good horror entertainment ought to be. Ultimately, *The Evil Within* is not just a good game, it is also one that dares you to tear your gaze away from it long

after you know you should have, and that perhaps is its crowning achievement. While it's not for the gore averse, and definitely not for children, survival horror fans will find plenty to enjoy here. [RN] **ts**



THE EVIL WITHIN IS NOT JUST A GOOD GAME, IT IS ALSO ONE THAT DARES YOU TO TEAR YOUR GAZE AWAY FROM IT LONG AFTER YOU KNOW YOU SHOULD HAVE.



PIPPA TSHABALALA

ON THE BEST OF 2014

2 014 is drawing to a close, and although I for one am most definitely glad to see the back of it (it's been a rough one!), there have still been some pretty awesome highlights as well as some bright spots on the horizon for the upcoming year.

Sometimes we look back over a year and everything seems to blur together – an eclectic mishmash of games, a few of which stand out brightly, and the rest of which blend into a generic mass of quickly forgotten, meh titles that no-one will remember a year from now. Luckily the highlights in 2014 have been good ones. Although I don't think that 2014 has been the best in video gaming in recent years, it's still had some pretty darn good moments.

The South African release of the Xbox One, almost a year after its release in other territories and the release of the PS4, meant that we took the final step towards next-gen. It's been a bit of a sore point for many that we (and some other territories) were so late on the rollout when the PS4 released worldwide within the same month, but finally we have managed to catch up. The question of course remains whether or not it will do well in our territory (there are certain features that are designed for an infrastructure better than ours), but for those die hard Xbox fans who avoided getting a PS4, it meant the opening up of a whole new next-gen world.

Interestingly, both the games that really made an impression on me in 2014 are both Ubisoft titles, the one being Watch Dogs. Although it certainly wasn't perfect, it initiated an excellent and thought provoking discussion around issues of privacy and online access. Sure it's something we've seen in other forms, but I think Watch Dogs has been one of the most successful in making us question how much of our information is available to those who know how to look.

Add to that Assassin's Creed Rogue – a game that has been a complete surprise to many of the gaming population. Honestly, this flew so far under the radar that I completely forgot about it until my promo copy was delivered. Released only on "previous gen" consoles PS3 and 360, it gives an alternative to the assassin viewpoint as well as tying up and linking any loose ends from the previous games. If you haven't yet sold or discarded your old console before going next-gen, make sure you pick up this title.

By Pippa Tshabalala.
Photographer: Tim Hulme.
Makeup artist: Natasha Carstens.

**GOOD, BAD
OR A BIT MEH?
PIPPA RATES
THE BEST OF
2014**

"I DON'T THINK THAT 2014 HAS BEEN THE BEST IN VIDEO GAMING IN RECENT YEARS, IT'S STILL HAD SOME PRETTY DARN GOOD MOMENTS."

Just like gaming highlights, this year has brought its fair share of gaming disappointments. The biggest one for me has been the 2014 reboot of Thief. This version was far less a stealth game than its predecessors and ended up being a forgettable, somewhat clunky addition to the franchise.

As 2014 finally draws to a close, we look ahead to a year with another hotly anticipated line-up. For me this includes The Witcher III: The Wild Hunt and Tom Clancy's The Division among others. Let's hope the titles we're all waiting for in 2015 don't blend into one another, and we have even more stand out moments than ever before. **ts**

WHO NEEDS SPACE?



I don't get space travel. This isn't easy to come clean about, here on the pages of TechSmart, a publication that I am guessing has readers the majority of whom totally get space travel. Every time I am about to admit this, I imagine Neil Degrasse Tyson swooping down from the sky like a superhero to knock some appreciation of space exploration into me. This is a scary thought. Back in college, Neil was a pro wrestler. And if he's powerful enough to have entire planets declared null-and-void I'm guessing he's powerful enough to open a can of whoopass upon me.

Still, though, I have to admit that when I hear about a tiny probe landing on a comet, various questions come to mind, among them "Why did the probe land on the comet?"; "Why must I care about the probe landing on the comet?"; and "Is it lunchtime yet?".

But when I ask these questions people get very touchy.

They tell me that space exploration is extremely important and essential to the development of all mankind.

Some even say that space exploration can lead to discoveries that can advance research into fighting deadly diseases such as Cancer. This could be true, but I would go out on a limb and suggest that maybe those doctors spending 24 hours a day in laboratories conducting stem cell research have more of a chance of making strides towards curing cancer than the scientists who are trying to attach probes to comets.

DISCLAIMER: I'm a musical comedian and actually know nothing at all about science, so I could be wrong about that. But I do find it strange that 'I-love-science' types, who usually pride themselves on how they put reason before emotions, become almost fanatical in their devotion to the merits of space travel.

"IT HAS TO BE SAID THAT THERE ARE PLENTY OF PEOPLE THAT I WOULD LIKE TO SEE TRAVEL INTO SPACE, ON CONDITION THAT IT IS A ONE-WAY TRIP."

WHEN IT COMES TO SPACE TRAVEL, DEEP FRIED MAN HAS NO IDEA WHAT THE FUSS IS ABOUT

If you are obsessed with space travel, part of me suspects that, although you'll never admit it, the reason for this is that the part of you that wanted to be an astronaut when you grew up never fully went away. I think some people spend a lot of time trying to convince us that space travel is useful, when deep down inside it's because they think that space travel is awesome.

Richard Branson has put a lot of money into convincing people that space travel is awesome, which isn't the easiest of tasks after one of his test pilots died during a test flight in California's Mojave desert. Before this tragic accident I read that Branson had managed to recruit plenty of A-List celebs for his debut space mission. Apparently the likes of Angelina Jolie, Brad Pitt, Justin Bieber, Ashton Kutcher and Leonardo DiCaprio all shelled out \$250,000 a ticket for the privilege of traveling through space for no particular good reason.

It has to be said that there are plenty of people that I would like to see travel into space, on condition that it is a one-way trip. Sending undesirable elements of our society into space, and then not sending them back, must be one of the most practical applications for space travel ever conceived. Perhaps we could start with our President Jacob Zuma. Now that's a space mission I could get behind. **ts**

The Elder God Detector

BY ZOE HINIS

Illustration: Joe Daly

Cake, who loved his twee human name and his loving human owners, had always known his kind's long-held purpose. He waddled through their suburban home, huffing as he was cursed to do, past canvases with trite hipster aphorisms, highlighted by the glow of a Macbook perched on a recycled wood pallet desk. Cake hated that his basket was so far away from his RFID-tag operated dog door; the mission across the house every night was unkind to him. But with shortened sinus cavities come important powers, and Cake was as fine an avatar of Pugkind as any. He paused in the living room, his eyes cast to opposite corners of the room. In the eco-friendly darkness of their home after hours, Cake held deathly still.

Pugs are a breed known to this world for their Tumblr-friendly personalities, utterly ridiculous faces and inability to breathe silently. But what they were truly bred for has been long lost to this world of bright lights and sanitised, managed horrors. The secret project of a spectacularly racist horror writer, pugs know and see more than just cute outfits and palate operations. Cake, begat of Princess P and Sir Moustache, was part of a long, long line of hunters, with eyes primed to see the horrors that lurk on the periphery of human understanding and spiritual tolerance. Like the horror that happened to breathe redly in the shadows of the lounge. Cake held his head up higher, tilting it just so to bring the creature fully into his vision. Pugs lack the imagination to truly attempt contemplating the vast, cold indifference of the creature that warped time quietly in the corner of the lounge. He lifted a black lip as he snarled at it. It cocked what might have passed for a head at the pug.

"How is it that you see me, when the mortals don't?"

Cake dropped onto his haunches. "The humans cannot bear to see, and so they don't. These people are frightened by rain spiders, by not sorting their garbage properly. They don't even know how to cope during black-outs. They don't even know how to survive without flat white coffee without almond milk in it. They would be crippled by the likes of you. It is why they raised us. We see and speak for them - we are the guardians of their sanity. It is the work of my squint-eyed kind."

The creature lapped at the shadows thoughtfully with its eye-mouths. "Fair enough. Needs as must when the unspeakable appear. I happen to be lost on my way to a convention of elder gods looking to branch out into public speaking. Do you happen to know the way to the Sandton Convention Centre?"

Cake's tongue rolled out of his mouth as he thought for a bit. "You could hop onto William Nicol, just a few blocks down. Go past the giant Pick n Pay, then head left onto Sandton Drive, can't miss it."

"Thanks," offered the unspeakable evil in the corner.

"Don't mention it," replied Cake. "But if you do come back, then I will have to summon the Gathering, and I would rather not. It is hell on the



electricity bill and it starts earth tremors. This city is one earthquake away from falling into the mineshafts whence it came."

The elder god, unnameable and older than the stars above, snorted. "I've got better things to do than trifle with a pair of intense power yuppies, mortal hound. So, left onto William Nicol?"

"No, right. Head down Ballyclare from here."

"Got it. May your path be littered with the innocent."

"Yeah, fine, whatever. Just know that this house remains under my protection."

It nodded, and like that, the corner emptied out. Unfazed, Cake nodded to himself and continued onwards towards his basket, where chew toys and soft fleece blankets from Woolies waited for him. **ts**

ZOE WINS

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