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LGX-506
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RETRO COUPE The Audi TT brings us back to the small racers that zipped around European ovals in decades gone by. It's the most dramatic of the new retro designs—with copious polished aluminum accents inside and out—but don't be fooled by its good looks. The \$35,000 TT is powered by an advanced four-cylinder engine that feels much bigger. And its ride and handling are sure to put a smile on your face, particularly as you whisk through corners. www.audi.com



TWICE THE PICTURE Like a standard TV, the Sony 34-inch high-definition set is a direct-view unit—the first direct-view digital TV to hit the market (the others are projection TVs). As such, it offers a glimpse of what digital TV can be. The flat-screen TV features a technology called digital reality creation, which doubles the resolution of standard TV signals so they resemble digital TV images. And a multi-image driver lets you watch two different video sources at once. Price: \$8,999. www.sony.com



THIN AND RICH You won't have to sacrifice form for function with Ericsson's R380—the first cellphone-PDA combo that's the size of a regular phone. Flip down the keypad and you'll find a touchscreen running the length of the phone. This display enables you to browse the Web, keep a calendar and address book, or jot down a note. In personal-digital-assistant mode, the phone recognizes your handwriting. The jack-of-all-trades R380 also features a speakerphone and voice recorder. The phone will be available early next year; price will depend on service provider. www.ericsson.com



CLEAN-RUNNING SNOWMOBILE If you like snowmobiling but hate the environmental cost of high emissions, you'll be thrilled by the arrival of Redline's Revolution, the first snowmobile with an efficient, four-stroke engine. The engine produces 95 percent fewer hydrocarbons and delivers better fuel economy than a similarly sized two-stroke-powered snowmobile. Key to the advance: The engine is the size of a traditional two-stroke; the added weight of previous four-strokes offset efficiency gains because of increased fuel consumption. The 2001 Revolution will cost \$12,500. www.redlinesnowmobiles.com

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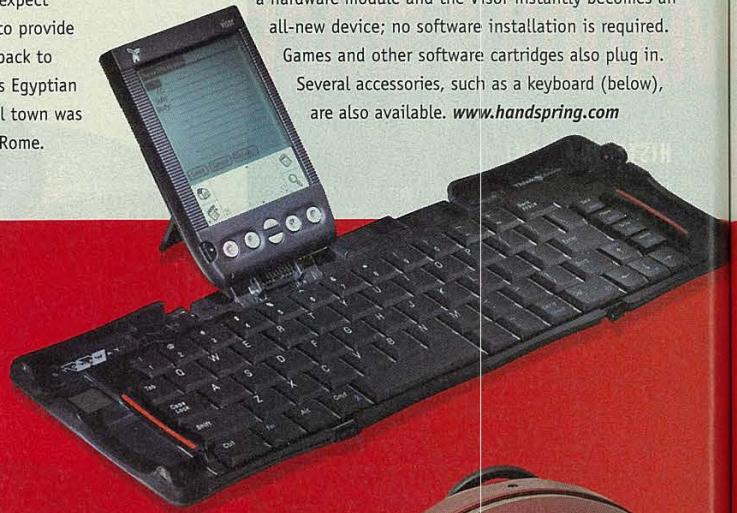
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SHOW ME THE MUMMIES Until they were found at the Bahareya Oasis, 230 miles southwest of Cairo, this cache of Egyptian mummies had remained undisturbed for 2,000 years. Since the discovery was announced earlier this year, 43 mummies have been found—and there may be thousands more. The mummies are unusual in that they exhibit both Egyptian and Roman attributes (such as Egyptian dress with Roman hairstyles).

Scholars expect the find to provide insights back to when this Egyptian provincial town was ruled by Rome.



SUPER ASSISTANT It's a cellphone. It's a pager. It's a GPS receiver. Actually, it's all of these—and more. Handspring's Visor (\$179) is a personal digital assistant that transforms itself into these devices at your whim. The pocket-size Visor, which runs on the popular Palm operating system, performs all the functions of 3Com's Palm III. The key difference: a slot in the back called the Springboard platform. Plug in a hardware module and the Visor instantly becomes an all-new device; no software installation is required. Games and other software cartridges also plug in. Several accessories, such as a keyboard (below), are also available. www.handspring.com



PICTURE PERFECT Looking for a convenient way to show off your digital pictures? No need to have prints made. Sony's Digital Picture Frame (\$499) is the first frame designed to display digital images—still or video. The 8.5- by 6.5- by 1.6-inch frame reads files stored on a Memory Stick, which you insert into it. Images can be presented as a slide show or manually selected. And you can hear video clips via a built-in speaker. The frame goes into sleep mode after 30 or 60 minutes. www.sony.com

BATTERY-POWERED MAID

Plop the circular Eureka Robot Vac down in any room, walk away, and the vacuum does your dirty work for you. The 15-inch-diameter device, shown as a prototype this year, locates the perimeter of a room by following an exterior wall and then crosses the room in a random pattern. Radar embedded in the unit's bumper detects furniture or objects left on the floor. Run time for the Robot Vac (shown on its recharger) is about an hour. Recharging takes 2 hours. Eureka plans to sell the vacuum within a few years. www.eureka.com



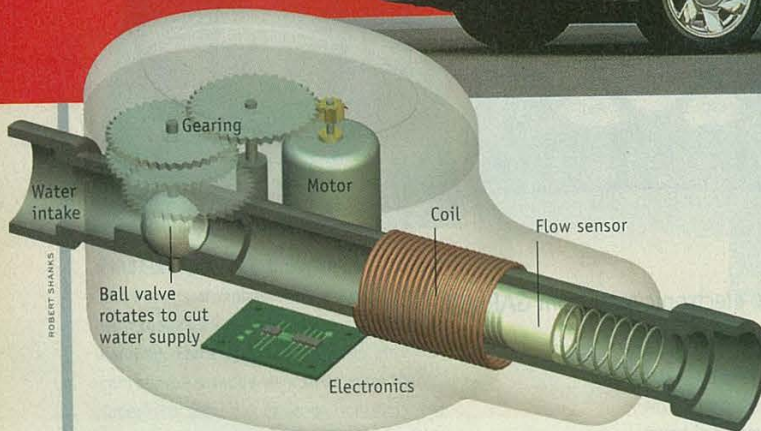
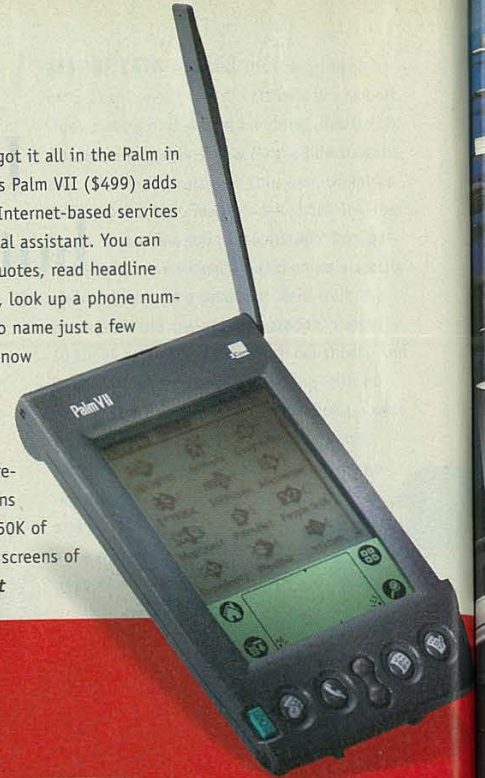
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FLYING BUS Sikorsky's S-92A Helibus, which flew for the first time this year, opens a new chapter in short-haul commuting. The helicopter carries 19 passengers in a cabin large enough for them to stand upright. It also gets them there in a hurry by cruising at 180 mph, a speed that would make other helicopters shake uncontrollably. Luggage is loaded through a ramp in the back. www.sikorsky.com



LUCKY 7 Now you've really got it all in the Palm in your hand. Palm Computing's Palm VII (\$499) adds e-mail and a host of useful Internet-based services to its popular personal digital assistant. You can book a flight, check stock quotes, read headline news, get driving directions, look up a phone number, or check the weather, to name just a few of the 100 options that are now available. To access these services, you raise the unit's antenna; a built-in wireless modem sends and receives the data. Service plans start at \$10 per month for 50K of data, or approximately 150 screens of information. www.palm.net



WATER WATCHER When you're away from home, there's comfort in knowing that circuit breakers are watching electrical loads and the security system is monitoring for break-ins. But there's never been a way to protect your home from leaky plumbing, the second-most costly insurance claim. Until this year. FloLogic measures how much water is flowing into the house through the cold water intake. If the rate exceeds a preset limit, the device automatically shuts off the water and sounds an alarm. The unit has two preset settings, home and away, for even more precise control. Price: \$200.

CUTTING-EDGE LUXURY Several features on Cadillac's 2000 DeVille place it squarely at the leading edge of technology. To wit: Adaptive seats automatically adjust to individual passengers; an optional infrared night-vision system allows the driver to see well beyond the high beams; and the GPS navigation system gives the driver audible directions. The full-size sedan also gets highly advanced electronic dynamic controls that smoothly balance the action of brake-activated yaw control and variable shock absorbers. As a result, the car is transformed from an unabashed highway cruiser to a car equally comfortable on winding roads. In addition, the restyled body houses a re-engineered chassis and a more efficient V8. Pricing starts at \$39,500. www.gm.com

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