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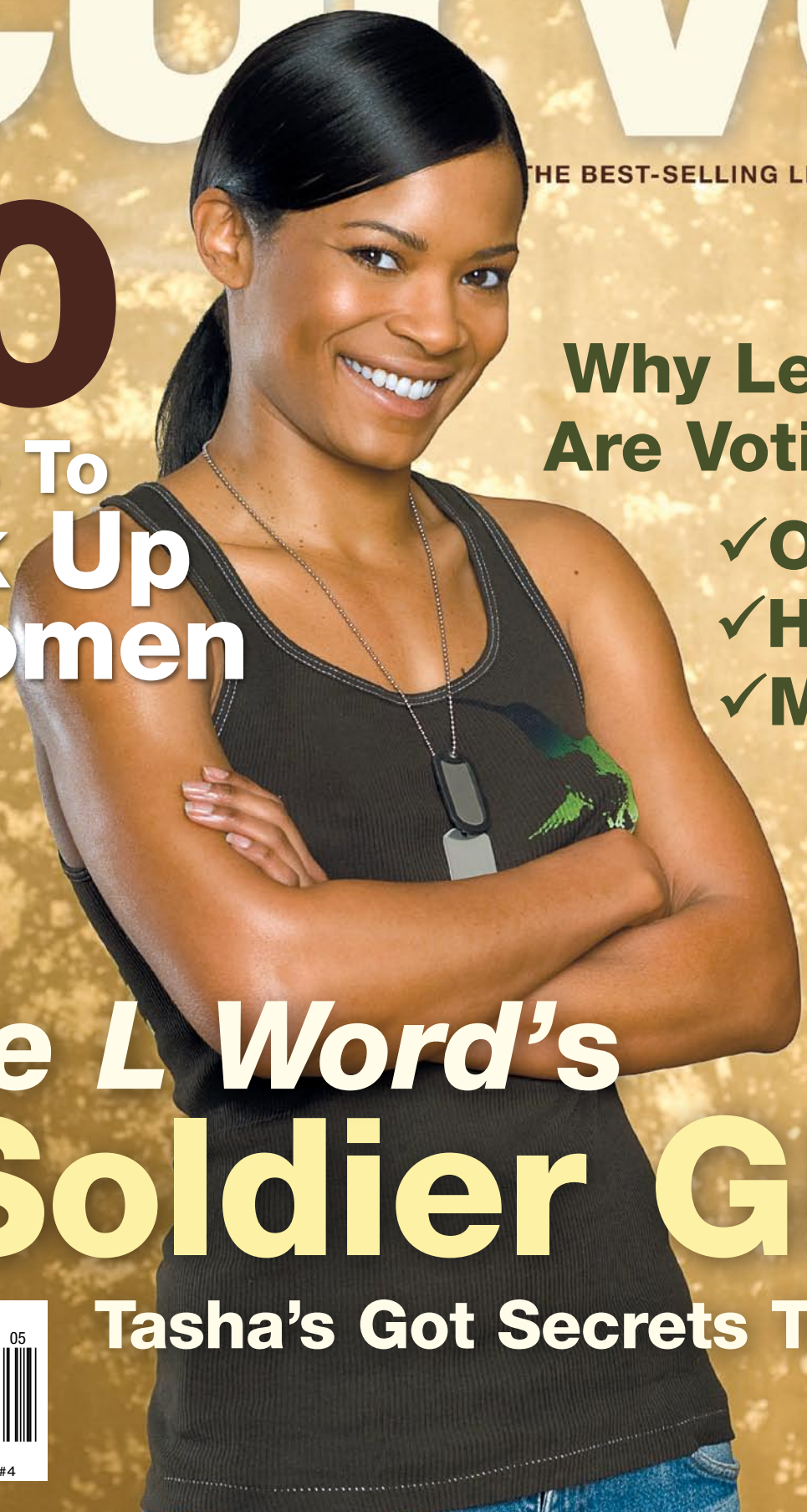
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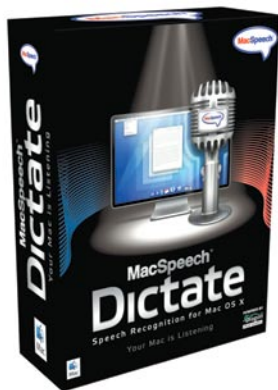
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MAY 2008 VOLUME 18#4

Toys for Your Inner Geek

For this Apple fan, the computer giant's expo was a dream come true. | **By Ondine Kilker**

Dream job? I was "assigned" to go to Macworld, the Apple expo in San Francisco. That's like being "forced" to go to Disneyworld when you're 8 years old, or like being "made" to go to Dinah Shore Weekend and report on who caught your eye. My only real challenge was to decide which products to cover. So, of all the many fun things Macworld had to offer, I've narrowed my reporting down to four products.



From top: The oh-so-sexy MacBook Air, MacSpeech Dictate is your girl friday, Drobo will save your tax returns *and* your porn, and cute and sexy Vestalife Ladybug speakers

Thin Is In

The MacBook Air (MBA) was definitely the highlight of the show. The adage that you can never be too thin finally does apply—and weighing in at a mere three pounds and less than an inch thick the MBA defines sleek. But Steve and Co. clearly want folks to go Zen and embrace a nonphysical world, and the CD/DVD driveless MBA reinforces Apple's recent announcement that digital movie files can now be rented and downloaded in minutes from iTunes. (Take that, Netflix.) The MBA also has an ecofriendly, mercury-free LCD display with arsenic-free glass and a recyclable aluminium casing. On the downside, the battery is not user-replaceable. (\$1,800 and up, apple.com)

You Talk, It Types

With MacSpeech Dictate comma you can actually talk to your computer, period. New sentence. OK, so you have to speak the punctuation marks as well, but it's still sweet. The ability to speak to your computer helps not only those who need a third hand, or might have a mobility impairment, but if you're into voice/speech control for your operating system, this software seamlessly switches between these two modes with a simple spoken command. MacSpeech Dictate requires an Intel-based Macintosh, running Mac OS X version 10.4.11 or higher. (\$200 and up, macspeech.com)

Your Personal Robo

So why is Drobo so great? It backs up your data and you don't have to think about it. You name it: music, movies, important files, emails, chats, porn. It protects your data automatically, while displaying pretty colored lights to let you know what's going on. But remember, when updating your operating system, unplug all peripheral devices as it has a tendency to write over their software. For the real techie rock star, there's the "addon" DroboShare that allows you to share files with other users, like your girlfriend, wife or one-night stand. (Drobo, \$500; DroboShare, \$200, drobo.com)

Style Sounds So Sweet

The stylish and compact Vestalife Ladybug speaker dock for iPod is the 21st century's insect offspring of an '80s boom box mating with a Sony Walkman—cute and trendy, yet surprisingly powerful. Besides having a universal dock and an AC recharger for your iPod, the Ladybug features flip-out speaker "wings" and a subwoofer for superior sound. Now you can take your earbuds out and get bustin' wherever you are. (\$110 and up, special edition \$125, vesta-life.com) ■



EDITOR'S PICK

Heavenly Sword: You are Nariko, the beautiful warrior who must use the Heavenly Sword to defeat King Bohan. But Nariko is racing against the clock: Whoever uses the Heavenly Sword feels their life slowly draining away. A compelling story, cinematic graphics and a vast array of weapons and combos made me start to drool a little. This hack 'n' slash game for the Playstation 3 also features a hint of a lesbian relationship between Nariko and the deadly archer Kai. Gotta love those homoerotic undertones. (Rated M, \$60, heavensword.com) — *Katie Peoples*