

**DIGITAL LIFE**

Julian Thorpe casts his eye over new tech on the market



**A Grand step forward for gaming**

**LOCK** up your children — the first trailer showing gameplay from the forthcoming Grand Theft Auto V has been released.

Game trailers come and go, with most raising little more than a shrug of the shoulders from even the most avid joypad lovers.

But this is something else. GTAV appears to be jaw-droppingly, unbelievably marvellous.

The trailer starts with an atmospheric sunset over a cityscape with jauntily angled palm trees in the foreground, while a blimp glides overhead.

The game is set in the fictional city of Los Santos, a subverted version of Los Angeles, first introduced in GTA San Andreas.

Even in that earlier game, in which Los Santos only made up about a third of the map (the rest being taken up by fictional versions of San Francisco and Las Vegas), it felt like a living, breathing city.

Playing it was almost as good as visiting Los Angeles — you could

cruise through Hollywood (or Vinewood as it is called in the game) in an open-top sports car, pedal around the south central ghettos on a BMX listening

to Dr Dre and randomly punch people working out on muscle beach.

What more could you want? GTAV will undoubtedly offer more; it promises to be mind-bogglingly huge, encompassing a vast city with shops, mountains, freeways, malls and skyscrapers.

The trailer offers tantalising glimpses of some of the features on offer — sniping people through windows of distant tower blocks using a high-powered telescopic rifle, dangling from a helicopter on a wire, bank raids, knockout gas, wanton destruction.

But if you do get bored of machine gunning gangsters, it appears there will be plenty of other less violent offerings.

Cycling races, golf (there appears to be a mechanism more complex than many dedicated golf games of yesteryear), scuba diving, flying, parachute jumping — you name it.

Quite simply, this is going to be the most exciting thing to happen in gaming since... well, ever.

It looks so good that legendary games designer Hideo Kojima took to Twitter to say that he was 'depressed' after watching the trailer because his latest game, Metal Gear Solid V, won't live up to it.

And most tantalising of all — in the last few seconds of the trailer, a brief shot showing GTA online — something all GTA fans have been clamouring for for years. If this is as good as it looks, it will change your life. Roll on September 17.

**Let fashion really go to your head this season and the bigger the better says Sarah Rhodes supplier of head wear to royalty**

**I**T'S all about big hats this season, whether it's for a wedding, a day at the races or any other special occasion.

Take that advice from the East Lancashire woman who has supplied head wear to the Duchess of Cambridge, her sister Pippa and mother Carole.

Based in Great Harwood, in the farmhouse at the 250-acre Martholme Farm, is the head office of Get Ahead Hats, a franchise which Sarah Rhodes is part of along with farmer's wives across the country.

"Yes, it is true, we have supplied The Duchess, Katherine, Carole and Pippa with hats. All the hats come into me and then go to all 18 showrooms across the country — all of which are based on farms.

"Kate had a hat about four years ago when William got the Order of the Garter, then she had the famous black hat that she wore at the Meade wedding just before she got engaged herself, Carole had a hat off us for Ascot," said Sarah.

The mother-of-two first went in to the franchise in 1999 when her two boys Simon and Richard were young as she wanted to be able to work from home.

She now does all the buying and organising at the head office, ordering samples and buying, before shipping the hats out to the other Get Ahead Hats franchisees.

"I buy them and in September, we have a meeting with all the ladies from across the country. The milners send samples and the franchisees chose the colours that they want in their showroom.

But ladies be warned fascinators aren't as popular as they once were and it's all about big hats and perchers — which is half of a hat on a head band.

"Fascinators have gone this



**HATS GALORE**  
Sarah Rhodes and some of her collection

**Hat's a right royal look!**

season. Thank goodness. I really enjoy it. I get to meet lots of nice ladies who are going to special weddings but they have the option to buy or hire.

"We get ladies from the age of 18 right through to the age of 90. We cater for all age ranges. It's funny because the styles that you think are a little bit older, you can get a young girl to try it on and she can look fabulous," said Sarah.

■ **To book an appointment with Sarah call 01254 889574 or visit [www.getaheadhats.co.uk](http://www.getaheadhats.co.uk)**



**SARAH'S TOP TIPS FOR CHOOSING THE PERFECT HAT**

1. Try it on with the outfit you have chosen to wear, so you can colour match the look.
2. Take a pair of heels at about the same height that you will be wearing on the occasion, when you step into a pair of heels you stand differently and the hat will sit at a better angle.
3. Don't spend a fortune on your outfit and forget to budget for the finishing touches — on your head.
4. You need to be able to see clearly, feel comfortable and enjoy wearing the hat.
5. Always see what it looks like from the back too.

**▶ Bose SIE2i – £129.99 from [currys.co.uk](http://currys.co.uk)**  
Exercise can be instantly more entertaining by adding your own soundtrack. Load up any device with motivational tracks and your work-out will be over before you know it, unless, you're using sub-standard earphones that won't stay put. This practical Bose set will not let you make/take calls as you move, they're also designed specifically for sports with an in-line speaker.

**▶ FINIS Neptune – £128.99, [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)**  
Swimming is often lauded as the lowest impact exercise, but after endless lengths, it can also start to feel the lowest interest exercise too. Put some fun back into your swim with this underwater music system, which clips onto your goggles then uses your bones to conduct the music. Totally waterproof, the memory is 4GB - more than enough music storage for an English Channel challenge.

**INSPECT A GADGET**  
Six of the best fitness accessories

**▶ Breville Blend Active Personal Blender – £29.99, [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)**  
Create pre- and post-workout smoothies, slushies or shakes with this superb blender. Put ingredients in one of the two bottles, place on top of the blade unit, then in seconds your drink is done, and you're set to run.

**▶ Slendertone Face – £250, [slendertone.com](http://slendertone.com)**  
We buy facial care products, but rarely consider giving the muscles around our faces the care they deserve. Pursuit of facial Yoga might seem daunting, but this headset makes things easier, stimulating the facial muscles for up to 20 minutes.

**▶ Punchbag Laundry – £19.99, [menkind.co.uk](http://menkind.co.uk)**  
Not only is boxing a great way to get active, it is an unbelievably effective stress reliever too. For this reason, Punchbag Laundry is quite ingenious. Load up all your laundry into the bag, and instead of your dirty clothes being an unsightly mess in the corner of the room, you can take swipes at it and be inspired to become the next champion in the red or blue corner.

**▶ Withings Pulse – £86.99, [expansys.com](http://expansys.com)**  
It might only be eight grams and the size of an eraser, but the Pulse can collect a lot of data to help you achieve your personal fitness targets. It syncs over Bluetooth with your smartphone and tracks activities including heart rate measurement, automatic run detection, steps taken, distance covered and calories burned.