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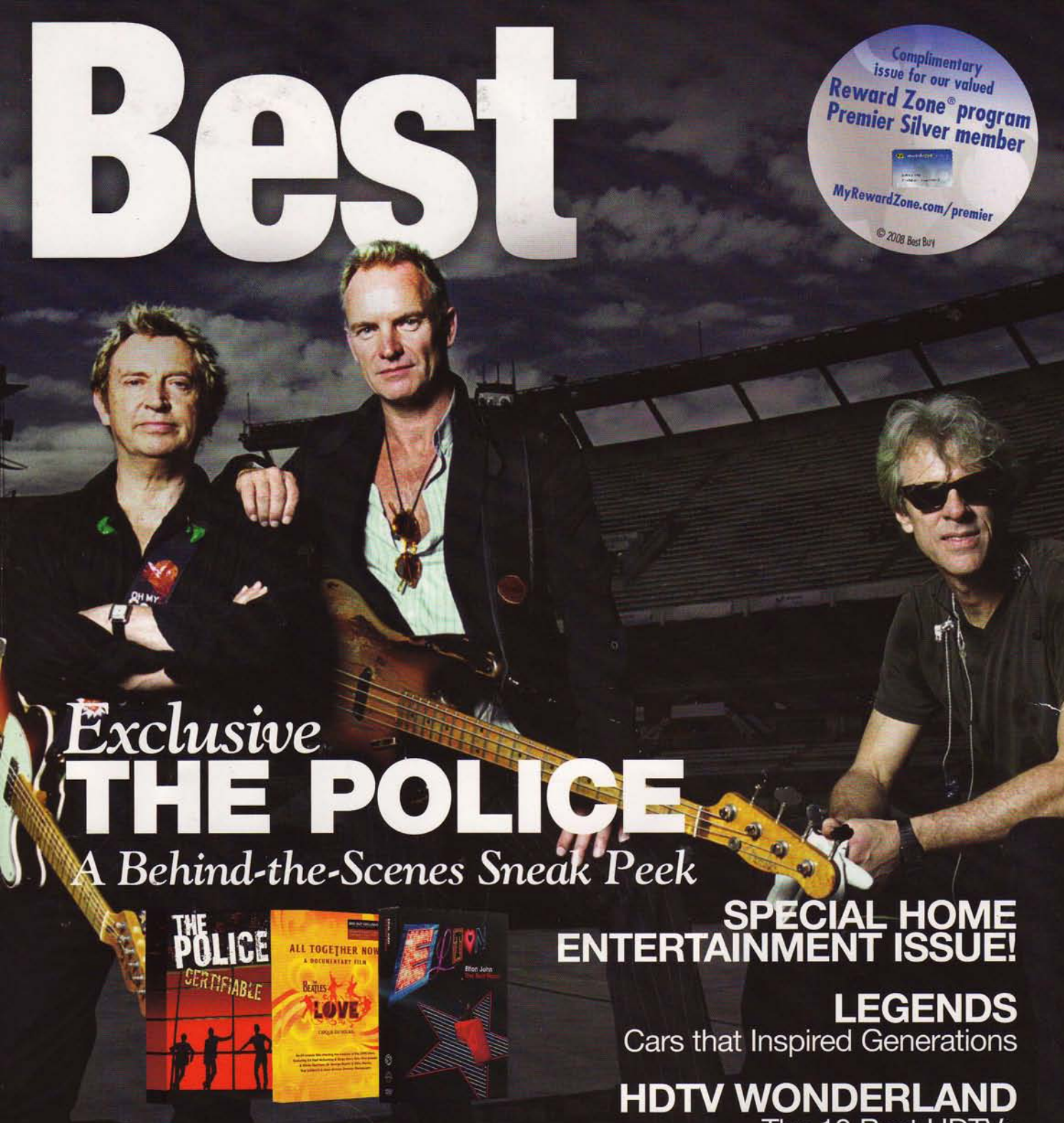

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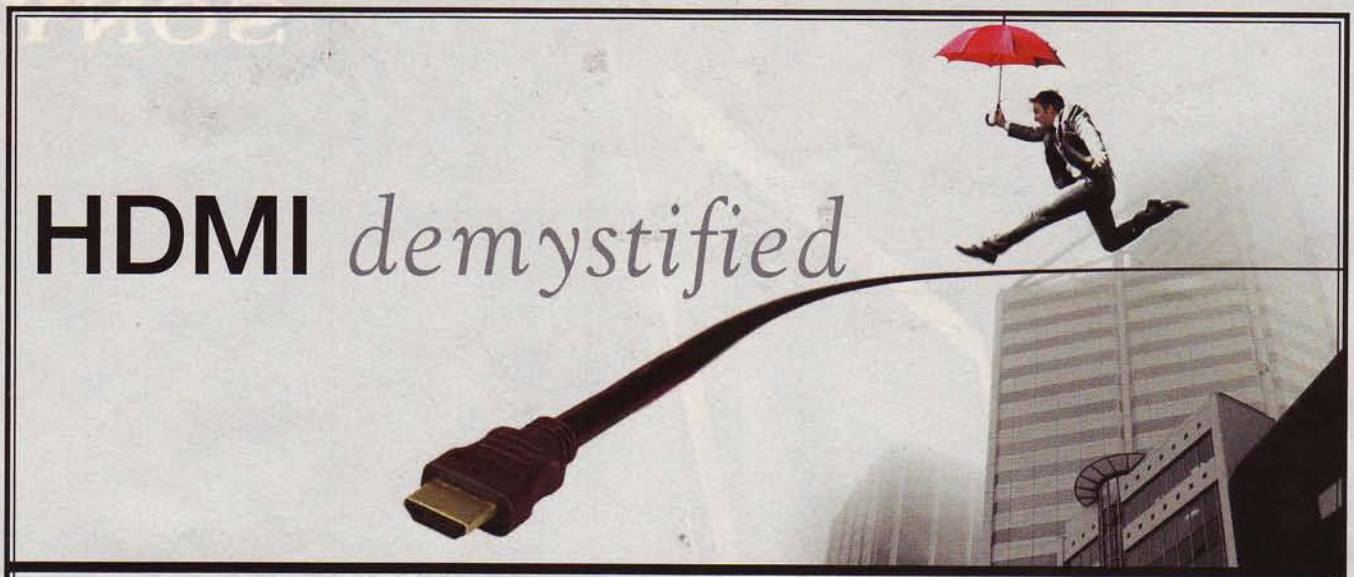
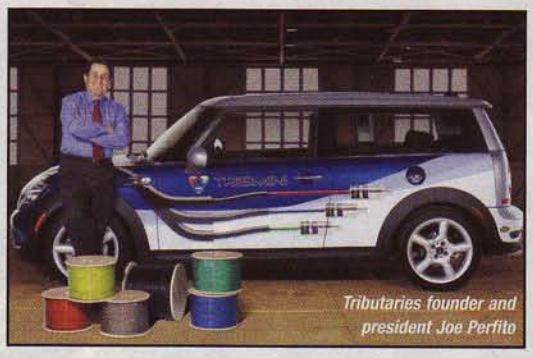
HDMI *demystified*



Setting up your HDTV can be confusing. In fact, many new high-def TV owners spend good money only to get their set home and, unbeknownst to them, watch a standard-def image. In addition to watching a high-def source, such as your satellite or cable company's HD channels, you must also make sure you are hooking up your TV correctly. We caught up with Tributaries Cables' founder and president Joe Perfito—an expert in high-def video cabling—to help you figure out your connection options.

There are many connections on every television's back panel that will accommodate old and new sources, Perfito notes. For example, many sets have an S-Video input, which does not pass a high-definition signal. If you are using this connection, you simply aren't getting an HD image, no matter what you are watching. Another common connection is the component-video input. This is a five-prong connection that attaches to a five-prong cable, which passes audio and video separately. While this cable does offer a high-def image, it only provides up to 1080i resolution, not the optimal 1080p, of which many of today's sets and sources are capable. Component video also has some copy-protection issues that make it an unworkable choice for movie studios concerned with content piracy.



Tributaries founder and president Joe Perfito

There is, however, another option for the ultimate in high-def video: High-Definition Multimedia Interface (HDMI). "HDMI technology has proven to be the best method of moving HDTV signals," says Perfito. "It is the Holy Grail for home-theater digital technology—a single-cable solution that provides a high-speed, wide-bandwidth connection that produces razor-sharp images, vivid colors, crystal-clear audio, and more."

HDMI takes audio and video signals and combines them into one cable. This makes for a much cleaner installation than component-video cables, which require five cables instead of one. Imagine if you were using four sources: Component video would require 20 connections to HDMI's four! Plus, HDMI offers digital audio with support for the new high-resolution formats, such as Dolby TrueHD and DTS-HD Master Audio.

"With more than 200 million HDMI-equipped units shipped worldwide in 2008 and an expected 1 billion by 2010, HDMI is the *de facto* digital interface standard for HD consumer electronics," says Perfito. The HDMI format is also more future-proof because it can handle up to 1440p resolution, according to Perfito. While there is currently no consumer format that takes advantage of this additional resolution, if one is created, existing HDMI cables will be ready for the challenge. As a bonus, the HDMI format eliminates lip-synch errors caused by the audio and video information being sent to the television via separate cables.

The benefits of HDMI cables are clear, but picking a cable can be difficult as choices are numerous. Perfito recommends the following guidelines to narrow the field:

- *Look for the HDMI logo to make sure you are getting an HDMI-certified product. After passing the certification process, HDMI Licensing will authorize the manufacturer to use the logo.*
- *Purchase from a reputable brand name.*
- *Opt for die-cast metal connectors, triple layers of cable shielding, copper-foil connector shielding, and silver-plated conductors. It sounds technical, but the result is a great image.*

Perfito also recommends you take the time to make sure your connectors and cables fit. "Plug the cable into an HDMI receptacle. It should be a tight, secure fit. If it has any degree of looseness, you risk the possibility of it becoming electrically disconnected when the component plugged into it is moved," he says.