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FORTUNE HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

Unwrapper's Delight

The toys of tech, from videophones to videogames, in a holiday package from Peter Lewis.

Monday, December 9, 2002

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(Photo: John Muggenborg)

Futuristic Phone

Nearly 40 years have passed since AT&T demonstrated its Picturephone digital video-telephone system at the New York World's Fair. Everyone thought that by the year 2002, videophones would be as common as personal hovercraft and vacations on the moon. And they were right! But now comes the **Vialta Beamer Phone Video Station**, which attaches to any old-fashioned analog telephone line and allows callers to see each other. (Both parties must have Beamers, of course; they cost \$500 for a set of two, and extra Beamers are \$300 each.) Setup is easy. When two Beamer buddies talk, they simply hit a button and see each other on a small color screen. The video ranges from decent to jerky, but for now it's the next best thing to being there.

www.vialta.com

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