

# HOW TO JUICE YOUR IPOD

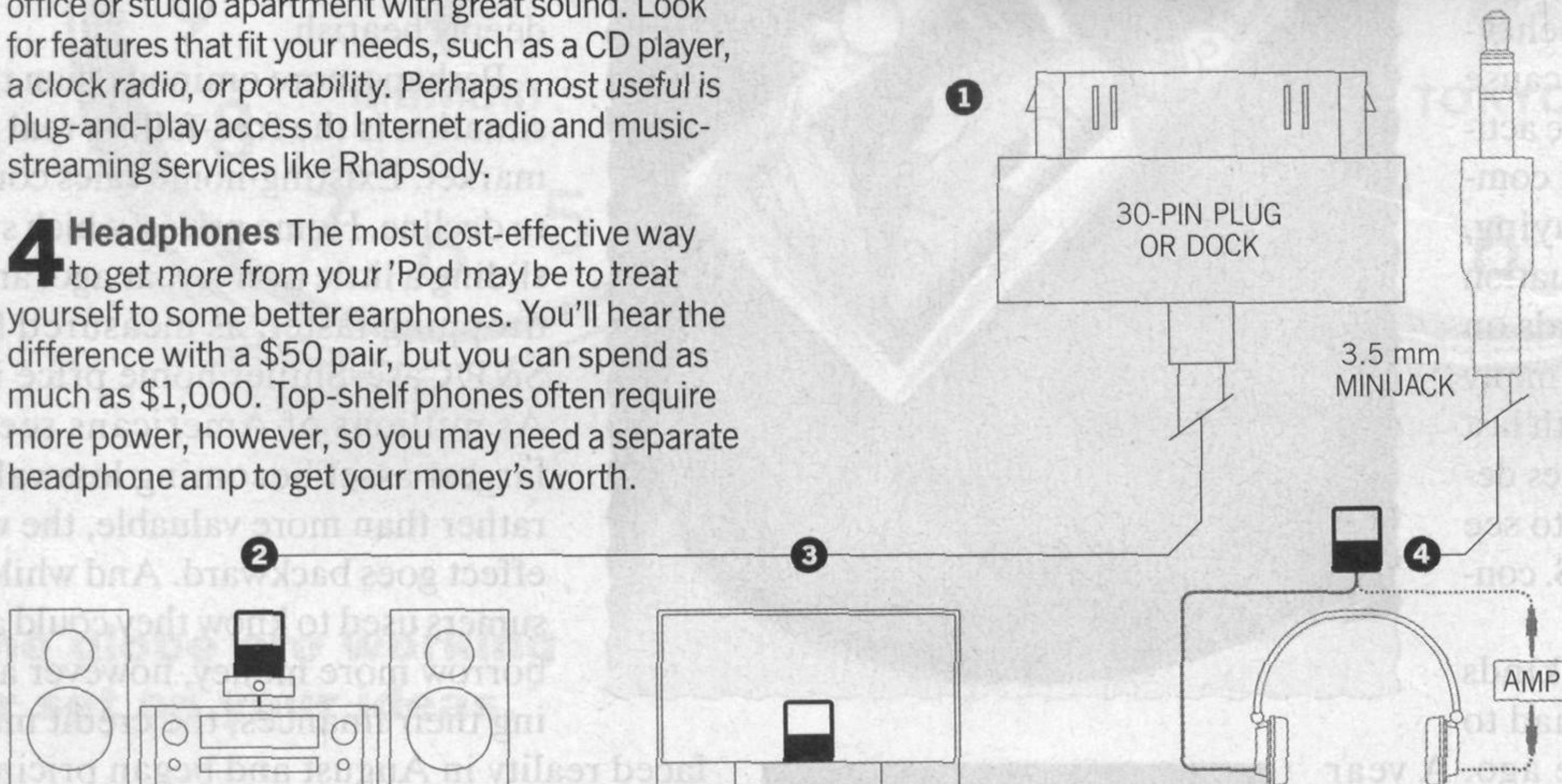
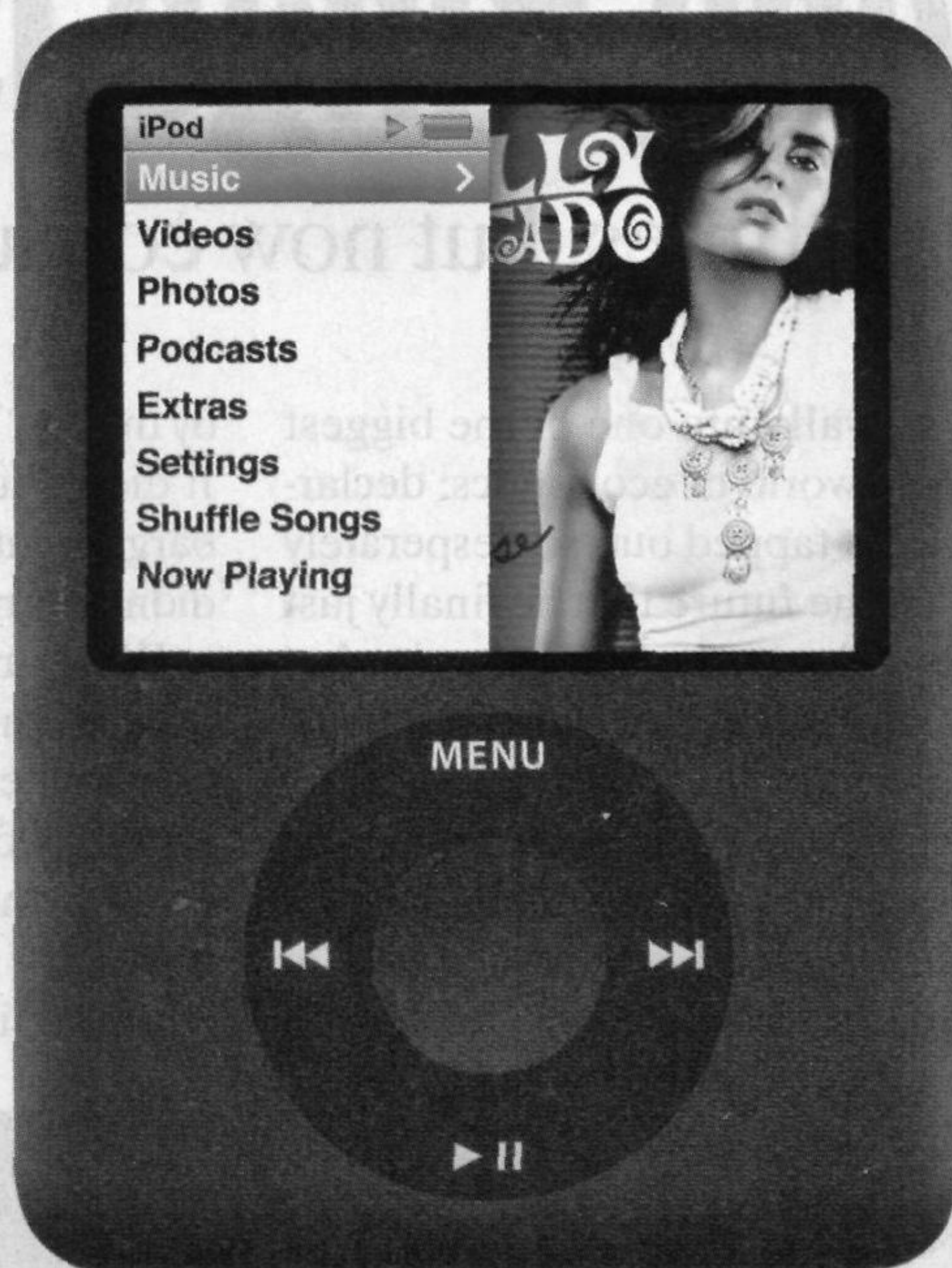
Has your iPod become the repository of all the music you really care about? Maybe it's time to retire the white earbuds and squeeze some big sound out of that little box. Here's how. **BY OLIVER RYAN**

**1 Connections** Start with the plug. You can get a stereo signal out of the minijack, but if you're serious about sound you'll use the iPod's 30-pin port. Both sources deliver analog signals, but the port provides "line-out" audio, uncompromised by volume settings that can distort the sound when they're too high or too low.

**2 Home stereo** To connect iPod to stereo, scrap the Radio Shack mini-to-RCA cable, and get a dock. The standard Apple dock is good, and will deliver clean audio and superior video while also charging the iPod, but third-party units come with more features: advanced remotes, sound amplification, and even Wi-Fi connectivity.

**3 All-in-one** Tabletop iPod systems like the SoundDocks from Bose (see below) can fill an office or studio apartment with great sound. Look for features that fit your needs, such as a CD player, a clock radio, or portability. Perhaps most useful is plug-and-play access to Internet radio and music-streaming services like Rhapsody.

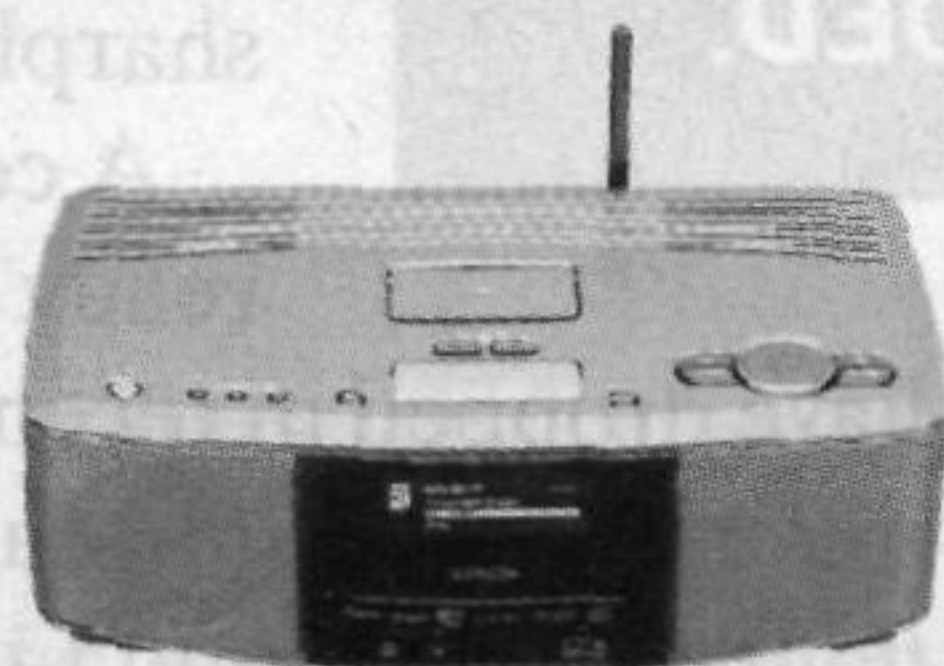
**4 Headphones** The most cost-effective way to get more from your 'Pod may be to treat yourself to some better earphones. You'll hear the difference with a \$50 pair, but you can spend as much as \$1,000. Top-shelf phones often require more power, however, so you may need a separate headphone amp to get your money's worth.



## THE BOTTOM LINE: THREE CAN'T-LOSE SYSTEMS



**IN THE LIVING ROOM**  
**ROTH MUSIC COCOON MC4** \$750  
Mixing vacuum tubes with an iPod is so retro, but purists swear by the warm sound. Speakers not included.  
**ALSO** Keyspan TuneView. Dock with color LCD remote, \$179.



**IN THE OFFICE**  
**DENON S-52** \$699  
An all-in-one that delivers superior sound and attractive features: CD player, satellite radio readiness, and Wi-Fi.  
**ALSO** Bose SoundDock Portable. Sleek system perfect for picnics, \$399.



**ON THE GO**  
**SHURE SE310** \$250  
Shure's ear canal phones come with adjustable tips and offer impressive isolation from external noise.  
**ALSO** Sennheiser PX 100. Lightweight, durable ear pad phones, \$50.

## KEY QUESTIONS

**Does the file format really matter?** Yes. Songs are typically compressed using an encoding standard, like MP3 or AAC. The key here is the "bit rate." Higher rates mean less compression and thus better sound. For the home, invest in a high-capacity iPod, and go for the higher bit rates and bulkier files. When ripping songs from a CD, choose the MP3 format at 320 kilobits per second (Kbps) or "lossless" AIFF. If buying from the iTunes store, look for 256 Kbps AAC. A guide to iPod capacity by song format:

SONGS PER 'POD CAPACITY	FILE TYPE		
	AIFF	MP3 320 KBPS	APPLE AAC 256 KBPS
SHUFFLE 1 GB	24	101	127
NANO 4 GB	97	406	508
NANO 8 GB	197	813	1,017
TOUCH 16 GB	387	1,626	2,034
CLASSIC 80 GB	1,937	8,138	10,172
CLASSIC 160 GB	3,874	16,276	20,344

**Are noise-canceling headphones worth the cost?** Perhaps. Around-the-ear models with antinoise technology work well to dampen steady noises like airplane drone. But "in ear canal" phones—like the Shure model below left—can be nearly twice as effective and require less power to deliver high fidelity. They do take some getting used to, however, so if you can, try them on before you buy.

**What's the best way to play my iPod in the car?** Aftermarket devices allow iPods to play through your tape deck or via an FM radio (e.g. the popular Griffin iTrip), but for quality sound you need an iPod-ready car or stereo system. Look for an "aux" input or 30-pin dock.