

### 3 THE MAGIC WAND

Dyson Airwrap Complete (\$699)

"I put the Dyson Airwrap in my online shopping cart a few times at the start of the pandemic, but it always sold out before I could convince myself that it was worth the price tag. Last winter, I broke my knee, there was another curfew and it was -30°C, so I was basically stuck inside with my blind dog and nothing to do except watch *The Real Housewives*. (For the record, they've all got really bouncy hair.) So when I found a refurbished one for a little cheaper, I bought it. My girlfriend got a new Playstation around the same time, and I tell people 'This is my Playstation' because I love playing with it. Do I think my ancestors would approve? Well, my ancestors gave me this thick, problematic hair."

- Ru, vintage-clothing collector, Montreal

### 4 THE SIGNATURE SCENT

Atelier Materi Narcisse Taiji Eau de Parfum Spray (\$305 for 100 mL)

"I've always worn perfume, and I wore the same one for 17 years: Do Son by Diptyque. I think of perfume as being part of one's identity, and I'd started to feel that I had outgrown Do Son. Then, in January 2021, my mother died. She had worn Dior's Diorissimo for my entire life—she very much influenced my feeling that you should have a signature scent. After she died, I decided it was time to start a new scent chapter. I wanted something special, something a little bit weird, to make me feel like a full adult. There's a small upscale boutique near my house, and it has perfume bottles displayed very enticingly in the window. So I went inside, and this wonderful salesperson spent 20 minutes spritzing cards for me and talking about scent. I actually went back a second time and did the whole routine again before deciding on Narcisse Taiji. Historically, I've been pretty cheap, [but] I don't feel guilty [about this purchase] at all. A bottle of perfume lasts me several years. I'm willing to spend on that, especially after the past couple of years we've had. Also, now that we can gather again, I want to make being in proximity to other people special. For me, investing in this perfume was a way of celebrating closeness. When I hug people, I want them to enjoy the smell—or at least notice it!"

- Kathryn, writer, Montreal

### 5 THE SACRED TONER

Santa Maria Novella Acqua di Rose (\$75)

"I've been using Santa Maria Novella rose water for about 15 years. However, I've been using less of it during the pandemic—not so much for frugality but because I haven't been taking care of my skin as regularly now that I work from home. The brand comes with a storied history: Monks in Florence, Italy, have been making Santa Maria Novella beauty products since 1612. I always recommend the products I'm completely committed to, but most people are put off by the price, so I rarely convert anyone. I truly subscribe to the notion that our body is a temple and in order to honour it, we should use high-quality products that keep us safe."

- Genevieve, executive assistant, Philadelphia

### 6 THE ALL-IN-ONE SERUM

U Beauty Resurfacing Compound (\$296)

"This purchase was definitely COVID-driven, but there were other elements to it too. I was trying to make myself feel nice when we were dealing with everything that went wrong in 2020 and then jumping right into crazy winter isolation. I felt extreme guilt about the price. I actually bought the sample size first, which was \$40, and even with that, I was like, 'Yeesh, 40 bucks for something so small.' But I really like it. The biggest selling point is that it takes away the decision-making process that would be involved in replacing it with other serums—which to me means it's money well spent. Both of my parents were poor growing up, so I was raised to save every single penny I could. I allow myself to spend on travel, but when it comes to clothes, shoes and even food a lot of the time, I buy things on sale. But I think about that price tag a lot—am I being a bit over-the-top? But then I would say, 'It's lockdown—who cares?'"

- Kristina, senior business analyst, Vancouver

### 7 THE TRENDY BIKE

Peloton bike and classes (\$1,895 and \$49 per month)

"My husband and I bought an \$80 folding exercise bike at the beginning of the pandemic, and I was so proud of how practical and frugal we were. But it was loud, rickety and uncomfortable to sit on. (Is something really a good deal if you never want to use it?) I definitely did some mental gymnastics to justify the upgrade to a Peloton. I found the price easier to swallow once we broke it down into 24 monthly payments—less than the cost of two gym memberships! As a lifelong self-conscious weakling, I can't tell you how amazing it feels to work out to goth and new-wave tunes while a beautiful 50-year-old badass tells me she's proud of me. For the first time in my life, I'm actually enjoying exercising. It's cheesy to say, but the expenses I regret the least are the investments I make in myself and my quality of life."

- Sarah, marketing manager, Burlington, Vt. ■





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