

Town & Country

SPECIAL ISSUE

ALL THE BEST

Super Naturals



What's the "real thing" when it comes to cosmetics? At first that struck us as a trick question, practically an oxymoron. The beauty industry exists because we're committed to enhancing what we're born with. So we're interpreting "real" literally, as in "from nature." Natural products are as authentic as it gets, and they appeal to our inner purist. (Not that we have anything against synthetics; they can be less irritating than their natural equivalents.) But buyer beware: the Food and Drug Administration doesn't define "natural" for cosmetics, so their quality varies widely. Here's how to ferret out the best: "If the ingredients listed on the label are familiar, like what you'd find in your kitchen or garden, that's a good sign," says Meredith Williams of Whole Body, NYC. Next, says Roxanne Quimby, CEO and cofounder of Burt's Bees, ask yourself whether you'd eat it: "If you put it on your skin, you're putting it into your body's chemistry." Things that "naturalists" consistently avoid: petrolatum and mineral oil; animal derivatives, like gelatin or tallow (honey, beeswax, milk and lanolin are acceptable); synthetic fragrances (essential oils are preferred); artificial colors; and chemical preservatives (rosemary and vitamins E and C are natural preservatives). Unopened, natural products have a one-year shelf life; once opened, they should be used within three to four months.

MELISSA MILRAD GOLDSTEIN

Cream of the crop, clockwise from top: **AESOP** Primrose Facial Cleansing Masque (\$35). **FARMAESTHETICS** Calendula Remedy Oil (\$18). **DR. HAUSCHKA** Firming Mask (\$34.50). **NATUROPATHICA** Crème de la Crème (\$18). **BURT'S BEES** Carrot Day Crème (\$12). **NEAL'S YARD REMEDIES** Rose Facial Oil (\$45). **WELDA** Arnica Body and Massage Oil (\$12). **FARMAESTHETICS** Rosewater & Glycerin Classic Water (\$19). **TOM'S OF MAINE** Peppermint and Baking Soda Natural Toothpaste (\$4). **JOHN MASTERS ORGANICS** Bourbon Vanilla & Tangerine Hair Texturizer (\$20) and Herbal Cider Hair Rinse & Clarifier (\$14). For Shopping information, see page 139.

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