

101 things worth the money

by MoneySense Staff with Paul-Mark Rendon, Karen Kelly, Dan Bortolotti and Laura Janeshewski

This first appeared in MoneySense magazine, September 2002.

http://www.canadianbusiness.com/moneysense_magazine/index.jsp

Consider this daunting fact: manufacturers introduce more than 16,000 products a year. Just to keep up, you would have to taste, smell or test more than 40 products a day, 365 days a year, before you could kick back and relax with your choice of coffee (from at least 20 popular varieties) or, better yet, a beer (from more than 100 brands available nationwide).

No wonder so many of us wind up sticking with the same old, same old. It's easier than leaping into this maelstrom of rampant consumerism. What we really need is a guide to the products that make a difference – the ones that are worth our hard-earned dollars.

We've devised just such a guide. After talking to experts, scanning consumer Web sites and reading more product-testing reviews than any group of human beings should be exposed to, we've arrived at 101 things worth the money.

Are these the only good products out there? Not by a long shot. It's simply our list of the products that struck a chord with us and with the authorities we interviewed. But we hope this admittedly personal list can be the starting point for a national discussion. We have launched a forum to allow readers to give us feedback and tell us what you consider the best consumer products on the market. Please contribute your thoughts and check on what others think – it's free information, but we believe that ultimately nothing is more valuable to the smart shopper than the informed opinions of other consumers.

Lifesaver

Kids plus water equals fun – and also danger. "They're so quick," says Michaele Goodeve, a retired grandmother of three small children whose house in Brighton, Ont., backs onto a canal. "They can move a lot faster than we can, and before you know it, they're in the water." Still, she worries a lot less with Safety Turtle on the scene. This alarm system has a base station that stays with an adult, and sturdy, colorful wristbands that kids wear whenever they're near a swimming pool, lake or river. When a wristband breaks the water's surface, the base station sounds a shrill alarm, alerting you that a child has fallen in. "It's nice to know I have a little helper," says Goodeve of her system. \$198 for the base station, \$92 for each wristband. www.safetyturtle.com.