



Because I'm worth it, too

BY ANTONY ANDERSON

Elvis greased it. The Beatles grew it. Bowie dyed it and Johnny Rotten buzzed it. I ignore it. Correction — I don't ignore my head of hair. I just want to pay as little attention as possible.

When the *Weekend Post* first invited me to test-dye a new product for men, L'Oréal's *Fria*, Multi-Faceted Shimmering Haircolour, I waffled. However, my girlfriend, Litsa (her real name) was encouraging and then increasingly enthusiastic. In fact, she became so enthusiastic I began to brood. Why is she so keen for me to change my hair colour? Does she secretly want a new boyfriend? A blond? I realized with a growing horror that I needed *Fria*'s shimmering, multi-faceted *je ne sais quoi* or I would be dumped for a retro-'70s glam king with flashier hair.

Given my amateur status, I needed a point-man for the conversion process and, of course, who better than the curiously enthusiastic Litsa.

On the appointed day, we called 1-888-4-L'Oréal (i.e. 1-888-my hair-is-now-green-you bastards) for some final words of advice. I was told that if I wanted to look like the truly fake coppery, blond hunk on the package, I would also have to bleach my hair. And I would need a chin operation, pec implant and opera lessons. With visions of bleach eating through my skull, I decided to risk my relationship and proceed without it.

Within seconds of that decision, I was sitting on the edge of my bathtub while Litsa donned the conveniently enclosed colourist gloves before kicking off our little chemistry experiment. The language was mock regal and very reassuring. There was the Shimmering Colour Permanent Haircolour Gel that had to be poured into the bottle containing the Shimmering Colour Developing Creme. There was an Aromatic Aura in an ampoule and an After Colour Hydrator No Build-Up Deep Conditioner for afterward.

Seconds after she began applying the gel and creme, my point man remarked that she had forgotten to mix in the Aromatic Aura. "What does this aromatic aura do, my sweet?"

"Makes your hair smell better." And indeed, I could smell what she meant. The fumes emanating from my increasingly applied scalp brought to mind a medicine cabinet at the end of a long



Test Drive

Fria Multi-faceted Haircolour by L'Oréal, shades for men — Camel, Cherry Cola, Bleach Blonding and Gothic. For men and women — French Roast, Hot Toffee, Creme Brûlée and Cashmere Blonde, \$12.99 per application.

week. But we were, as the Americans said in Vietnam, committed. There could be no turning back.

Once applied, we sat back and waited 25 minutes while my flat lifeless brown follicles fast-forwarded to shimmering and multi-faceted colour. I noticed the instructions beckoned all users to "Free Your Imagination."

I immediately imagined howls of derision from my friends on the badminton court. Looks of disgust from my mates at aikido. I also (and this was quite unintentional) imagined dangerously beautiful women begging to play with my new locks, while I directed them to my pec implants and grasp of 19th-century Italian opera.

After 25 minutes, I washed my hair out with the After Colour Hydrator No Build-Up Deep Conditioner and gazed upon my new shimmering multi-faceted existence. I turned nervously to gauge Litsa's reaction. She loved it. Clearly for now, the relationship was saved.

But I had to test this new look in a larger pond and I had to do so alone. The first person walking up to me walked right past. So did the second and third. Within hours, I could see that no one was paying any attention. At badminton and aikido, people noticed the difference with a



First step first: I contemplate making a change (top). Then my new shimmering multi-faceted image is before me and my relationship is saved.

shrug. Gadzooks. What does it take to impress these jaded consumers?

Then I saw a woman sporting fluorescent pink hair. Her follicles obviously shimmered more than mine. This was unforgivable. Feeling very David Bowie, I felt I just had to have that colour. Then I remembered meeting one of Litsa's friends whose hair was a glowing blue. I took a deep breath. This was a war of attrition with no rules. I couldn't play this game. Choosing discretion, I pulled back from the brink and prepared myself for the emergence of my first roots that would signal the return to my original, happy ignorant state.

Your telltale medicine cabinet

BY RUBY ANDREW

Forget about leftover tabs of mescaline — the boomer's new drug of choice is Zantac® (as in indigestion). Not to mention "little helpers" for back pain, baldness, obesity and, ahem, that nagging performance problem in the sack. If your bathroom shelves are stocked with the products shown here, then for God's sake, take it easy on the StairMaster. Chances are, your heart's not what it used to be, either. Difficult as it is for them to admit, baby boomers don't have much of the baby left in them anymore. Sure, a personal trainer and a good hair colourist can keep the telltale signs of decrepitude at bay, but the household medicine cabinet tells another story altogether.

BENGAY® Ointment

Oooh, that feels good. Unfortunately, sore muscles and arthritic pain demand extra-strength rubs that smell an awful lot like household cleaning agents. You might as well forget about the sheepskin rug, the brandy snifter and the roaring fire. At your age, the goal of a good massage is to leave you feeling limp, not horny.

Propecia®

Sounds like a flower, and claims to grow well — hair, that is. Male-pattern baldness can hit as early as age 20, but after 40 it treats men like so much old-growth forest ready for clear-cutting. Just be warned that possible side effects include a decreased libido, erectile dysfunction and ejaculation disorders.

Dr. Scholl's® Bunion Guard

Orthotics, anyone? The bones in our feet spread as we age, and corns, bunions and stress fractures are often the result. So are trips to the podiatrist — but chances are, you'll still have sore feet.

Zantac®

The ads show an attractive woman who can't take the spicy Cajun cooking in New Orleans. The reality is that after age 40, your digestive system slows to a crawl, creating tummy upsets and related disorders such as constipation (see Metamucil). Ever thought about eating less, exercising more and cutting down on stress? The Zantac® brochure recommends doing just that.

Robaxacet®

For back pain so extreme that putting on your own underpants is just about all you can manage in a day before it's time to take them off again. The good news is, chronic back pain often disappears about the same time you start receiving your Canada Pension cheques. By then, of course, you'll be happy just to walk upright.

Metamucil™

Forget mental blocks. Once middle age encroaches, you've got blockages of another sort. Basically, your body's plumbing has become as sluggish as the sewage system in a third-world country.

Premarin®

Estrogen used to be a major component of birth control pills. Now it's the magic ingredient saving lives of menopausal women (and their mates) everywhere.

Viagra®

Rhymes with Niagara — as in second honeymoon. Viagra may help clear up that nasty impotence problem, but note that research indicates many women prefer a hug and a box of chocolates to a roll in the hay.

Ambien

As our bodies age we require less food, also less

sleep. Why, then, does a sleepless night feel a whole lot worse at age 45 than at age 25? Although doctors like to recommend plenty of exercise and no caffeine, the pharmaceutically sophisticated boomer is just as likely to request a prescription for Ambien, one of the most popular sedatives of the many now available.

Prozac®

Depression is as ubiquitous in middle age as a saggy butt. Come to think of it, a saggy butt may actually be the cause of depression.

Xenical®

One of the newest wonder drugs, Xenical® is actually meant for the seriously obese — not paunchy mid-lifers desperate to elude the elasticized-waist syndrome of their parents' generation. Those who do manage to get their hands on it might want to weigh the potential benefits against one of the possible side effects: fecal incontinence.

L'Oréal (for her), Just for Men

Heather Locklear can get away with showing her roots, but then, her roots aren't grey. Steel yourself for monthly "touch-ups" for the rest of your life.

Preparation H®

Indigestion, constipation, haemorrhoids. Cheer up. Some people swear by Preparation H's tissue-shrinking properties, which can reduce those nasty little crow's feet that no longer disappear after a good night's sleep.

Activue® Bifocal Contact Lenses

Blurry vision used to be a good thing (as in, "Wow, everything's turned paisley!") Now it's a bad thing. Whether you opt for bifocal contact lenses or little half-moon glasses perched on the edge of your nose, you're now only a few steps away from the LARGE PRINT section of the library.

Bestsellers

Après-sun lotions are soooo cool

After a fun day in the sun you can still feel as if you've been burned, even if you've been fully protected by sunscreen. Now there's only one bottle you want to reach for — and it has to be the most calming, soothing, cooling after-sun lotion you can find. Hopefully moisturizing, it may even coax a burn into a tan.

Bain de Soleil Après Soleil

This jumbo bottle will take you through the summer and beyond. The tester likes the pepperminty scent and says the lotion helped enhance her tan after a weekend in the sun. With pure aloe and added papaya, the lotion is a little heavy, but absorbs quickly. It prevents flaking and drying, leaving skin supple and moist. 400 mL \$7.99

Piz Buin After Sun Moisturizing Lotion

"It feels great, smells amazing, makes my skin soft and claims to prevent UV-induced ageing by neutralizing free radicals. What more could you want?" That from the tester who wouldn't change a thing about this lotion. Rich and cooling, the cream glides on easily. The perfume-like scent lingers for hours. It absorbs fairly quickly and is not at all greasy. "It left my skin feeling very hydrated and moist." 200 mL \$17

Biotherm BLOKIDS After Sun Calming Lotion for Kids

The peach-nectarine scent grabs attention — kids love to have it rubbed on after baths. One six-year-old likes the light and silky formula. Delicate enough for a child's skin, it's non-greasy and absorbs quickly. Mom's only gripe is that it's a bit pricey for the wee bottle. 150 mL \$22

Coppertone Cool Beads! AfterSun Moisturizer

This clear gel has suspended blue and yellow beads that explode when rubbed onto the skin. Very cool looking, the beads contain vitamins A and E for supposedly extra-moisturizing benefits. The tester used it five times on dry, sun exposed skin. "It is moisturizing initially, but not lasting." The texture is a little too sticky, and the two-to-three minute wait for it to absorb is annoying. 340 mL \$8.09

Avon Aloe Vera Gel

Too much sun? Reach for this classic after-sun calmer. Nothing feels better than soothing aloe on baked skin. Luckily, our tester wasn't sun-burned, but she liked the smell of the gel and its quick absorbing coolness. 150 mL \$3.99

H2O+ after-sun refresher gel

The icy-blue hue of this gel makes it very inviting. The tester likes the cooling effects, but she found it doesn't moisturize as well as other after-sun lotions she's used. "I felt like I was putting hair gel on my legs." But it absorbs surprisingly quickly and has a light and refreshing scent. "I prefer cream, but this gel looks really cool." 120 mL \$17.50

