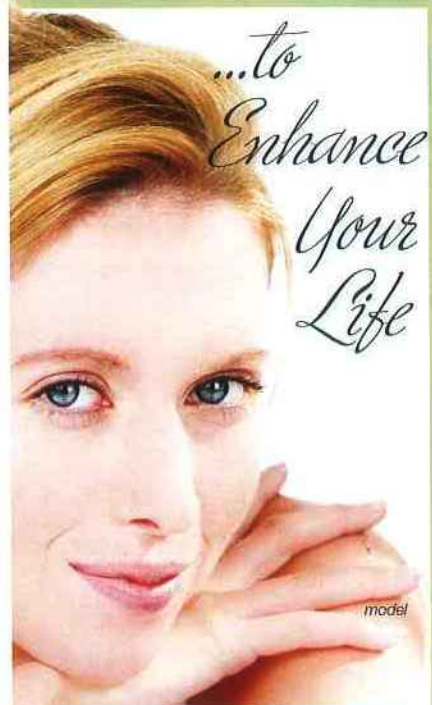


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FEELING FABULOUS

Those Pearly Whites

BY CARLA BREER HOWARD

French Roast fuels my mornings, as do blueberries. Then there's the afternoon pick-me-up of 72-percent cacao chocolate (or any chocolate, for that matter). Finally, a pinot or cabernet accompanies the evening meal.

While my taste buds exult in this flood of antioxidants, my teeth have dulled down from this colorful assault.

I want a dazzling smile that radiates youth, health and even animal energy. Visualize George Clooney.

Well, that's fun, although not exactly me, but you know what I mean.

For adults, achieving that powerful magnetism doesn't come easy and it doesn't come cheap. Professional whitening, although effective in one office visit, can cost \$300 to \$400. For the rest of us, there are the myriad do-it-yourself kits that deploy the same peroxide-based bleaching agents that your dentist uses, in lower concentrations.

Typically, these use either dissolving strips or gel against your enamel surface. An unhappy side effect can be temporary tooth and/or gum sensitivity.

Consumer Reports magazine published a study its August 2009 edition. The only product rated "Very Good" was Crest Whitestrips Supreme. But you'll invest \$50 and a total of an hour a day for three weeks to make it happen. I don't know about you, but by then, I'd be thoroughly sick of the whole business.

Further, you've got to purchase it on the Web or at your dentist. (Believe it or not, it's sold on Amazon, including "used" sets. I just don't want to know.)

So it was with considerable interest that I was introduced to the Luster



Weekend Whitening System that promises results in three days, just in time for "a wedding over the weekend, an interview on Monday, a high school reunion (nah, all girls), or a special date." Hmm. And all this, from using a "patented technology" that preps the teeth with a 10-second slosh with "Accelerator Mouth Rinse," followed by a brush-on application of "Super Whitening Gel," that's sort of like painting your nails and stays on for 10 minutes. The rinse enhances the effectiveness of the gel which, therefore, has a lower peroxide level than most at-home products. That means zero-to-minimal tooth sensitivity.

After three days of using it, my naturally "warm white" teeth do indeed look whiter, by at least 4 shades. And the process really wasn't a pain. Also, I'm happy to report that I've experienced no sensitivity whatsoever.

Interesting, according to the manufacturers, it's the "only over-the-counter whitening product to be FDA-cleared," which is always nice to know.

You'll find it for \$20 at Walgreens. Incidentally, they offer a one-hour version, complete with blue light. (Remember George Clooney in the opening of "Intolerable Cruelty"?) Now what was that about a "special date"?