

THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO BUDGET BEAUTY

Expert-approved, affordable products that deliver premium results? Yes, please!

BY LAUREN EZEKIEL



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We're only three weeks into January, but it feels like a lifetime. After the festivities of December, it's not only our bodies that are exhausted, but our bank balances, too. It can be a struggle to keep up with bills, let alone treat yourself to new beauty products. However, when your shampoo runs out or you reach the end of your retinol, it's not easy to go without. Fear not! If you're in need of a re-stock but trying to stick to a budget, we've asked industry insiders for their most trusted, affordable buys. Only those that can achieve the same results as premium products, at a fraction of the cost, made the cut.

CLEAN SWEEP

When it comes to shampoo, you can cut back without impacting the health of your hair - as long as you pick the right products for your hair type. Fortunately, there are plenty of brilliant budget options in the supermarket aisles, as high-street brands continue to up their game with innovative formulas. If you're looking for on-trend glass hair - AKA super-shiny, smooth locks, without greasy roots - you can't beat **Tresemme Lameller Shine Range, from £2**. The shampoo and conditioner combined costs less than £5, and they'll last for weeks. For dry or damaged strands, hairstylist Edward James recommends **OGX Damage Remedy+ Coconut Miracle Oil Shampoo, £5.65**. He says: "Having tried the best on the high street, I can honestly say this is a great alternative to expensive options like **Kérastase Bain Satin Shampoo** ✓, **£25.05**. Infused with coconut milk and egg white proteins, OGX hydrates and strengthens hair, leaving it soft, shiny and far more manageable after being rinsed away."

BELOW THE LINE

Love **Victoria Beckham Satin Kajal Liner, £32**, but don't want to fork out that much? Then make-up artist and beauty influencer Mira Parmar, who judged our *Fabulous Beauty Awards 2024*, recommends **Hildun Silk To Set Kajal Pencil, £16**, for very similar results. "This small brand can really compete with its premium counterparts," says Mira. "The pencils glide on easily and stay in place for hours." For a dramatic, yet effortless, going-out look, use the buttery-soft formula along your lash line, extending into a short flick at the outer corner of your eye.

PRICE OF OIL

If your hair is struggling post-party season, as well as being impacted by the cold air mixed with central heating, a hair oil could be just what you need. A good hair oil helps revive frizzed strands by conditioning the shaft, without weighing down your hair or leaving it greasy. "**Orbe Gold Lust Nourishing Hair Oil, £38**, is the dream - weightless, luxurious and packed with nourishing ingredients," says Edward. "However, a great alternative is **Lee Stafford Argan Oil Nourishing Miracle Oil, £12.99**, which is a fantastic swap for the price. It also uses argan oil to tame frizz, add shine and soften strands, delivering that gloss without the premium price tag."

BEAUTY

BRONZE AGE

At this time of year, adding a bit of warmth through clever placement of bronzer can give your complexion a much-needed lift. According to celebrity MUA Lan Nguyen-Grealis, who counts singer Raye as one of her clients: "Contouring products come in all shapes and sizes and are standard for lifting and sculpting. I like to use a cream texture, as you can apply it to your eyes, lips and cheeks. If you love **Makeup By Mario SoftSculpt Shaping Stick, £32**, a great alternative budget buy is **Studio London By Superdrug Flaunt Flawless Bronzing Stick, £6**." Apply with an angled cheek brush, rather than directly to the skin, for an airbrushed look and effortless blend.

PRIME TIME

If you have oily skin or like to use a primer that smooths and blurs your complexion, it can be tricky to find products that work but don't cost the earth. Beauty fave **Benefit The POREfessional Face Primer, £32**, is brilliant for minimising pores and helping your make-up last all day, as it gives an even, flawless base on skin, especially when it's oily and make-up tends to move. However, Lan says there is an alternative - and it costs a third of the price. "I love **ELF Poreless Putty Primer, £10**, as it gives a lovely, soft, airbrush finish to the skin and there are different finishes to choose from depending on skin needs, such as matte, luminous, acne-fighting and poreless."

PROTECT & PERFECT

You do not need a complicated, multi-step routine to have good skin, explains dermatologist Dr Beilbei Du-Harpur. "When I was a medical student sitting in my first dermatology clinic, an incredibly young-looking consultant told me that avoiding the sun as much as possible and wearing SPF every day was key to long-term skin health. One of my favourite SPFs is **Avène Cleanance Tinted SPF50** ✓, **£13.20**, which has a matte finish and works well with my skin tone." Mira says she loves **Bioré UV Aqua Rich Watery Essence SPF50, £15.99**. "It's non-greasy, absorbs instantly and leaves no white cast, which is important for brown skin. The formula also contains hyaluronic acid, which is perfect for retaining moisture."

TREAT TIME

Is your hair damaged and lifeless? Incorporate a leave-in mask or deep conditioner into your routine. "**K18 Leave-In Molecular Repair Mask, £30**, is brilliant for repairing hair at a molecular level, thanks to its patented peptide technology," says Edward. "For a more affordable alternative, **The Hair Lab By Mark Hill Hydrating Treatment, £10.99**, works well. It's packed with argan oil and helps with strengthening hair, while leaving it silky smooth. It's not as intensive as K18, but with regular use it makes a noticeable difference to damaged strands." **F**