



ROAD TEST

Yes, He Does Windows

By STEPHEN TREFFINGER
Published: May 13, 2009

In the first of a series of monthly columns, Stephen Treffinger, a writer specializing in design and products for the home, tests window cleaners.

Multimedia



He decided to wash glass in two settings. In the first, an Upper West Side apartment with unobstructed views, he sprayed 20 products or mixtures on the windows. In the second test, each of the cleaners was applied to a pane of glass and a pane of mirror spattered with toothpaste, hair gel and Pam cooking spray to simulate kitchen grease and bathroom buildup.

high points.

FIRST, the good news. You really can have sparkly, streak-free windows. The bad? Unless you clean often or the glass isn't that dirty, you'll need more than a quick spray and wipe. Life is not a TV commercial. But with a product that suits you and a couple of accessories, it's not that hard. And the results are very satisfying.

To find the best products, I tried about 20 — everything from supermarket standards to homemade elixirs.

Familiar, ammonia-based brands like Windex did an O.K. job, but the smell was overwhelming. I'm not a huge fan of ammonia. To some people it says "clean"; to me, it says "headache." I also found these products evaporated too rapidly, which creates streaks if you don't wipe fast enough.

Ammonia-free products often contain some type of plant-derived surfactant (i.e., detergent), so they do a good job of cutting through grease, though the soap factor can also mean they require a little more muscle to remove. [Options for Life](#) and Mrs. Meyer's Clean Day Window Spray both performed well and left few streaks. The latter comes in a range of scents; I preferred the lemon verbena, which smells clean but not perfume-y.

Foams were new to me, but one called Sprayway proved to be a favorite. The best thing, aside from efficacy and beguiling scent, was that it stayed put after I sprayed it on, eliminating the race to wipe it off before it dripped.

SIGN IN TO
RECOMMEND

SIGN IN TO E-MAIL

PRINT

SHARE

ARTICLE TOOLS
SPONSORED BY

A story
about two
strangers.

