

MAGAZINE

A woman with long brown hair and a man with short dark hair are shown in profile, facing each other. They are positioned on the left and right sides of the frame, respectively. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

**THE
HAPPINESS
ISSUE**

Sex.
Love.
Money.
Prozac.
Friends.
Twitter.
Alcohol...

**WHAT REALLY
MAKES
US HAPPY?**



Beauty

Sarah Vine

Message in a bottle

Join January's teetotal bandwagon and revel in the benefits



So. New decade, new you, right? Maybe you're already stockpiling cabbages, or boiling up the Chinese herbs. Perhaps you've signed up for the gym, invested in new yoga pants, chucked out the leftover chocolates from Christmas. Very soon, your body will be a temple.

Crucially, you're going to lay off the sauce. This is a very common phenomenon: people who think nothing of downing a bottle of wine for dinner the rest of the year suddenly slam on the brakes in January. You invite them round for supper. Wine? "Ooh, no, not for me," they say, as though you had just offered them a glass of warm virgin's blood. You are left to sip your drink in solitary shame, like a tramp at an AA convention.

Ordinarily, I have little truck with such behaviour. But ever since I wrote, back at the

beginning of December, that I was going to attempt a hangover-free festive season, I have been that infuriatingly smug person. I've stuck to my promise and, with the possible exception of a very small glass of very nice red wine that a friend opened as a celebration (it would have been rude not to), I have had a virtually alcohol-free end to 2009.

To begin with, I had an overwhelming and irresistible urge to fill the wine-shaped hole in my life with sugar. Around 8pm, when ordinarily I would have been pouring a nice big glass of something cold and alcoholic, I would find myself kneeling on the kitchen worktops, rifling through the uppermost cupboard in search of the children's stash of sweets – elderly Jelly Tots, half-eaten Milky Ways, out-of-date Haribos. Not a pretty sight.

Mercifully, this phase only lasted a few days, whereupon it was replaced at first by a headache, then by extreme tiredness. Or perhaps it was boredom. One of the things about not drinking is that everyone and everything suddenly seem a lot less fascinating. Even watching telly loses its appeal. Without the warm glow of chablis, Jeremy Paxman is just a bit short-tempered and rude; *Question Time* suddenly seems full of puffed-up self-publicists spouting platitudes; Huw Edwards loses his natural comedic edge.

I'd get to 9.30pm and, without alcohol to keep me up, I'd simply toddle off to bed with a book and a cup of herbal tea. I haven't slept so much or so soundly since I was a child. I also became mildly socio-phobic, since getting through any sort of drunken gathering while stone cold sober is extremely tedious.

Why am I telling you all this? Well, because of all the facials, massages, reflexologies, acupunctures, detoxes, wraps, steams and other mumbo-jumbo treatments I've ever undergone; of all the creams, lotions, potions, exfoliators, clarifiers, masks and concealers I've ever put on my face, nothing has made me look perkier than a few weeks without alcohol. My eye bags have shrunk and my skin is clearer than ever. Seriously: it's the greatest beauty aid you'll ever find. And it doesn't cost a penny. ■

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BOUDOIR CLASSIC

Guerlain Midnight Secret

Launched: 1990. Creator: Guerlain

Midnight Secret was unique when it launched. A silky serum designed to speed up the skin's natural night-time recovery process, it claims to be your "eight hours" in a bottle, even if you're only able to catch a few winks. It is quickly absorbed, helping maintain moisture and elasticity. The original formula has been updated over the years, but it remains a great life-saver for night owls (£56; 01932 233887).



Spa gazer

WHAT: High-Gloss Diamond Polish

WHERE: Smilepod, 23 Rose Street, London WC2 (smilepod.co.uk; 020-7836 6866)

HOW MUCH: £85 for 30 minutes

A visit to the hygienist is never going to rank up there with a massage in the bliss-out stakes, but, as a walk-in oral beauty service offering cosmetic dental treatments, Smilepod will certainly put a spring in your step. Qualified dentists carry out hygiene services detailed in its spa-style "Smile Menu" of treatments, from cleaning and polishing to tooth-whitening. The High-Gloss Diamond Polish removes heavy deposits of tartar with an ultrasonic scaler, flushing out bacteria and smoothing the surface of teeth to help prevent further build-up. A calcium carbonate powder is applied, which fizzes pleasantly in the mouth to remove any excess, followed by the diamond polish – essentially a paste with minute diamond particles. Afterwards, teeth feel smooth, fresh and clean, with renewed sparkle that lasts.

Aaah factor ●●●●●
Value for money ●●●●●
Results ●●●●●