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CLEANING

IS TRULY FREE THE ANSWER TO YOUR CLEANING WORRIES? SOMETIMES

We tried this eco-friendly cleaning brand.



Written and Tested by [Jonathan Chan](#), senior manager of lab operations with a decade of experience testing products.

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I've tested quite a few cleaning products—everything from **eco-friendly detergents** to using **sonic waves to get the grime off jewelry**— so when I was tasked with testing the **Truly Free** lineup of cleaning products, I felt confident. Little did I know just how much butter and madness I was going to encounter.

However, after testing five Truly Free products, I think the brand's name holds up. Everything I tested did not contain any toxic materials, and cleaned fairly well.

About Truly Free

Truly Free is a made-in-American brand headquartered in Traverse City, Michigan, that specializes in refillable cleaning supplies. Stephen Ezell started the company in 2015 after one of his infant children developed a head-to-toe rash attributed to chemicals in laundry detergent.

So Ezell created a product that was made from non-toxic chemicals, doesn't incorporate single-use plastics, is cruelty-free, and environmentally friendly.

When you order Truly Free you get empty bottles and cleaning concentrates. Most of the bottles have a fill line to indicate how much water you have to add in to dilute the concentrates.



Credit: Reviewed / Jonathan Chan

You dilute the cleaning concentrates with water.

When the cleaner runs out, you only need to purchase more refill pouches, reducing plastic waste. There are also discounts available if you opt for a subscription service.

The pouches themselves are, according to a Truly Free team member, made from “recycled plastic, with a zipper-lock seal at the top.”

What we tested

The Reviewed labs received a massive package from Truly Free. I decided to test five different products to get a general sample of what the company has to offer.

Here's what I tested:

- Truly Free Everyday cleaner
- Truly Free glass cleaner
- Truly Free Stone & Steel cleansing polish
- Truly Free Space Freshener
- Truly Free laundry wash in signature scent

How we tested



Credit: Reviewed / Jonathan Chan

Butter was the primary stain used to test Truly Free cleaning products.

With so many cleaning products, I racked my brain about how to create a mess that was both easily repeatable and a good representation of actual household detritus.

Then I stumbled upon a device in our kitchen testing area: the **Au Cao Butterbox**. I stole it and began smearing butter everywhere—on stainless-steel fridges, over countertops, on mirrors, and all over myself.

When this moment of catharsis ended, I realized that the Butterbox was the perfect tool to create controlled stains that put many of these cleaning products to the test. It allows for even application of a stain on a variety of surfaces. Butter itself is relatively homogenous and the grease provides a good litmus test to see if these cleaning products are better than just using plain water.

Speaking of water, one other thing I wanted to note is that I used a consistent water temperature when mixing all the cleaners—around 100°F.



I did my best to make sure everything was consistent for every product.

The company also touts its non-toxic, plant-based, and environmentally friendly ingredients. I ran all of the ingredients lists past our chief scientist, David Ellerby, and also looked up individual ingredients on the **Environmental Working Group** guide to verify the claims.

The results

Truly Free Everyday cleaner

Truly Free's Everyday Cleaner Review



I started off testing the **Everyday cleaner**. Using the Butterbox, I smeared a line of butter on a wooden counter.

I cleaned the stain using the Everyday cleaner and the Truly Free-branded **reusable cleaning cloths**.

Overall, the cleaner didn't cut through the butter like a hot knife. However, after several applications and wipes, it did get the job done. I also liked the fact that it was completely scent-free.

When David Ellerby reviewed the contents of the Everyday cleaner, he remarked that it was all plant-based. He then proceeded to ingest some of it. This is highly not recommended, but it bodes well for how non-toxic the Everyday cleaner is.

In full disclosure, I also tasted some. It tastes bitter and very one-note. (Again, don't try this at home.)

If you're looking for a more effective cleaner, I suggest checking out **Bona's all-purpose cleaner**.



Truly Free Everyday cleaner

A cleaning product for just about every occasion.

[Buy at Truly Free](#)

Truly Free glass cleaner



It's perfectly normal to smear butter on mirrors—for testing purposes.

To test the glass cleaner, I smeared yet more butter on a mirror. It reminded me of my teenage-emo-vampire phase where I hated my own reflection.

After spraying the glass cleaner, I switched from the Reusable Cleaning Cloth to paper towels. Now, paper towels are not **how you clean glass** because they can leave lint streaks. However, I feel like a lot of people use them to clean their mirrors and windows, making them best for real-world testing.



Paper towels are not ideal for cleaning glass, but they work in a pinch and the Glass Cleaner left the mirror looking pretty (I look this good all the time).

The results surprised me. The mirror looked immaculate with no streaks or spotting. The glass cleaner left the mirror perfect for taking selfies to show off my latest outfits. I may have to use it for my next **fashion review**.



Truly Free glass cleaner

A glass cleaner that will have your mirrors and windows looking spotless and sparkling clean.

[Buy at Truly Free](#)

Truly Free Stone & Steel cleansing polish



Stainless steel comes in many finishes and colors and butter looks different on each one.

Reviewed tests a lot of **fridges in our appliance labs**, so I'm quite familiar with stainless-steel cleaner.

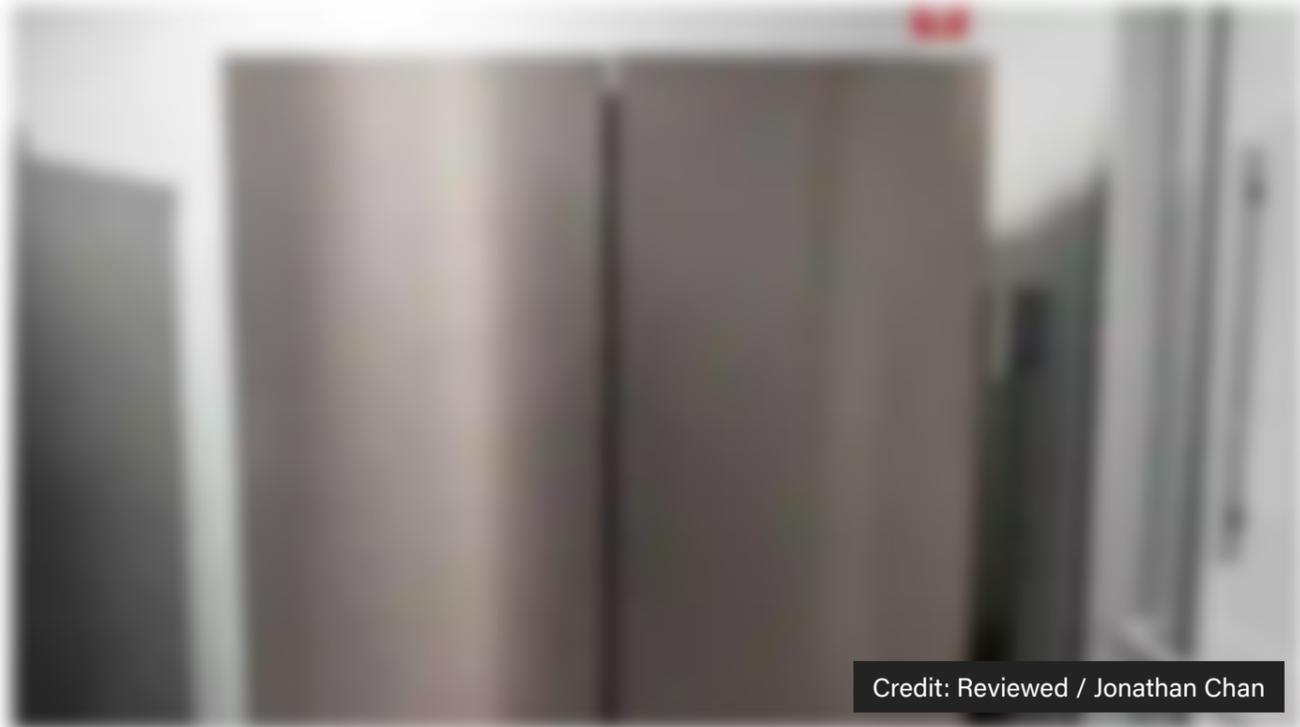
One thing people don't think about is that stainless steel comes in many forms, especially when it comes to fridges. Each brand has its formula and coating. Not sure which one would come out best on camera and also provide the best testing ground, I smear butter on every fridge in the appliance lab.

Did I look like a madman doing it? Maybe. Did anyone question what I was doing? No.

In the end, I chose the **Samsung Smart Bespoke RF23A9675AP**. It has removable panels so I could really hose it down if the Stone & Steel cleansing polish didn't work—or replace the panels if it completely failed.

I was also really interested in comparing the plant-based cleaner versus a more traditional stainless-steel cleaner. We use **Weiman** in the labs and I find the fumes are not pleasant while the Truly Free polish is fragrance free.

I cleaned one side with Weiman and the other with Truly Free. See if you guess which side was cleaned with which cleaner.



Credit: Reviewed / Jonathan Chan

One side was cleaned with Weiman and the other with Truly Free.

I was unable to tell the difference. That gives huge props to Truly Free. The testing shows that the Stone & Steel cleansing polish is right on the money.

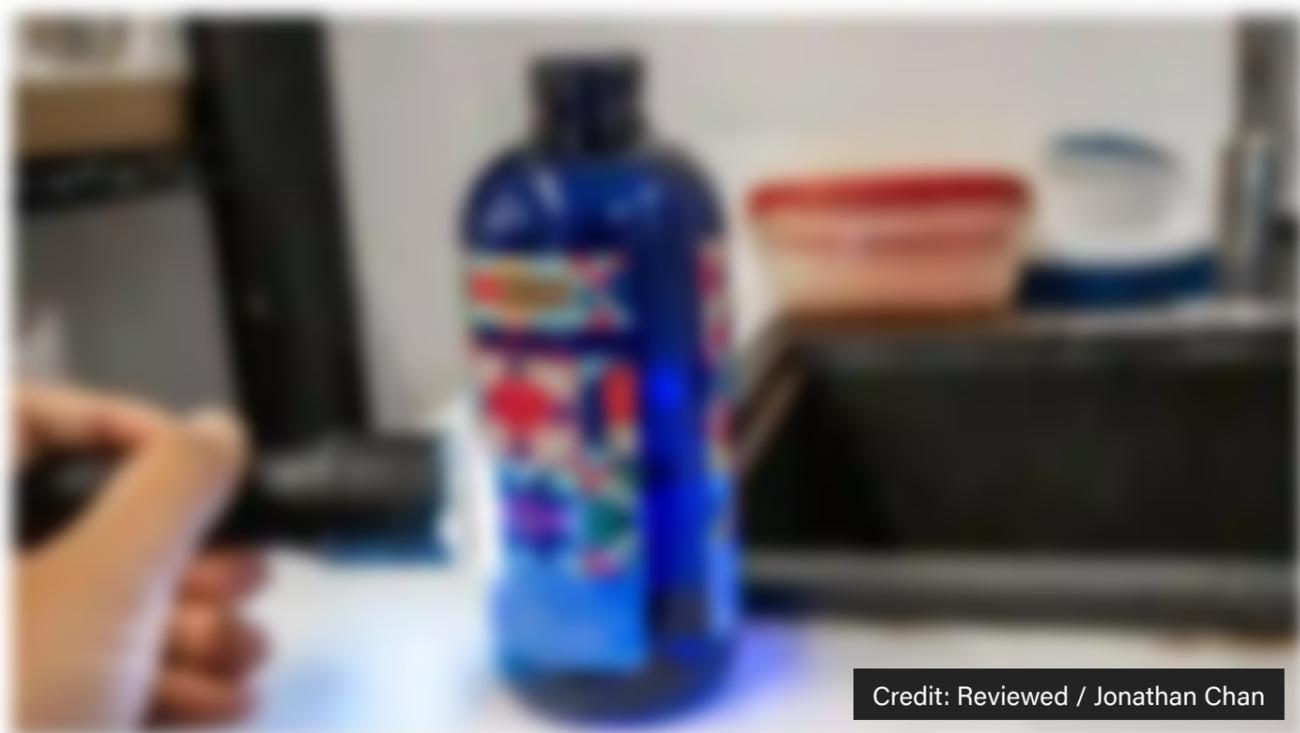


Truly Free Stone & Steel cleansing polish

Clean your fridge or other steel items for a sparkingly clean look.

[Buy at Truly Free](#)

Truly Free Space Freshener



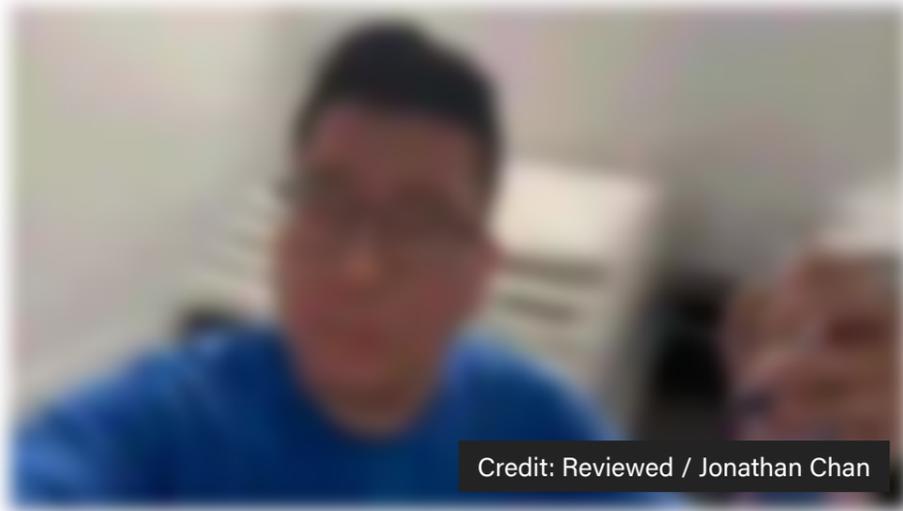
Credit: Reviewed / Jonathan Chan

The dark bottle made it hard to see if I was pouring the right amount of water.

This was the most divisive product I tested from Truly Free. It is basically essential oils in a spray bottle. Of all the Truly Free products, this air freshener proved to be the most difficult to mix.

The bottle is dark blue, probably to protect the essential oils from sun exposure. Because of that, it's hard to tell just how close you are to the fill line. I ended up putting a flashlight against the bottle to ensure I was doing it right.

When I was done, I spun and sprayed the Space Freshener in every room in our testing labs.



Credit: Reviewed / Jonathan Chan

The smell test for the Truly Free Space Freshener.

Difficulty making it aside, the office split evenly between liking the sweet orange and rose scent and thinking it was far too cloying. My general feeling is that if you like using essential oils for aromatherapy, you're going to like this.



Truly Free Space Freshener

An essential oils spray to give your room a refreshing smell.

[Buy at Truly Free](#)

Truly Free laundry wash in signature scent

Reviewed has a well-established protocol for testing laundry detergents, so we use a lot of the same tools in **how we test washing machines**. In a nutshell, we use pre-dyed stain strips that are covered in common household blemishes like chocolate and red wine. Using a spectrophotometer, a special computer program determines how much each stain is lifted after a wash.

The results are interesting. The Truly Free detergent does about 5% better than Molly's Suds, Charlie's Soap, and Tru Earth. These are also **eco-friendly laundry detergents** that don't ship with any water content *and* claim to cater to people with sensitive skin.

If you're looking for a laundry detergent that's good for the environment and your skin, the laundry detergent by Truly Free is worth checking out. It requires less fossil fuel to transport, you can easily refill the bottle without making a mess, and it provides a competitive clean against similar brands.

However, for people who want better stain removal over eco-friendliness, the Truly Free detergent is about 10% to 16% less effective than Persil Free & Sensitive. These results vary because you adjust the amount of water you add to the Truly Free mixture,

according to where interpret the fill line to be. In our lab, we ran through four rounds of testing with two different concentrations: In one batch we added 43 ounces of water per packet, and 46 ounces for the other.

You'll also want to consider price. If you're just buying the detergent, the cost at the time of publication (February 2024) is around \$.35 per load, which is more than Persil at \$.27 per load. However, the price for Truly Free drops to \$.23 per load if you purchase five or more items from its lineup.



Truly Free laundry wash in signature scent

An eco-friendly alternative to your standard laundry detergent.

[Buy at Truly Free](#)

Should you buy Truly Free cleaning products?

Yes, but you should pick and choose

Just judging Truly Free by the products we tested, I can say the brand is above average. None of the products that I tried out were straight-up duds. They lived up to claims made on the website, especially with being non-toxic and environmentally friendly.

I think the competition outperforms Truly Free's laundry detergent and Everyday cleaner. You can get better cleaning performance for less money, if you're buying them individually.

However, the glass cleaner and Stone & Steel cleansing polish exceeded my expectations.

Truly Free, as a company, is more than just a purveyor of cleaning products. You can check out the **causes that the company supports** on its website and see if they jive with your own beliefs.

If you're interested in using fewer plastic bottles and spending less fuel transporting water, Truly Free cleaning products are worth checking out.

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