

THE "L" LIST

21 THINGS WE'RE LOVIN' RIGHT NOW

* Oprah has her "O" List; Martha Stewart has her "Good Things." So, in the spirit of Valentine's Day, I've put together my own "L" list of things I'm lovin' right now. From books to beauty to basketball, I'll share with you some of my family's favorite products, places and pastimes. Some are new; others are "newly discovered," and all are affordable or even FREE. Enjoy!

1. THE HULA HOOP

I have rediscovered the fun of hula hooping! We bought a hula hoop for my daughter recently and now the whole family does it! Not only does hula hooping bring back fond childhood memories, but it's a terrific exercise. According to the American Council on Exercise (A.C.E.), the average person can burn approximately 200 calories in just 30 minutes of exercise. Plus, hula hooping can help tone your waist and arms, increase the flexibility of your spine and muscles and relieve anxiety.

2. WINCO

Like many families these days, ours has been looking for simple ways to save money. So when a friend told me about WinCo—a no-membership, warehouse-type supermarket where you bag your own groceries—I was open to giving it a try. I became a fan on my first trip! I was absolutely blown away by their selection of merchandise (which includes many items I've been unable to find in "traditional" stores) and friendly

customer service. Our family has even turned bagging our groceries into a game, with my 8-year old daughter leading the effort. Though I still shop at other grocery stores throughout the month for incidentals or specialty items (I have a list of "must-haves" like Traders Joes dark chocolate cranberries, sweet potato fries and Pear & Gorgonzola dressing), we save our "big shop"—and big savings—for WinCo. WinCofoods.com

3. IGOOGLE HOME PAGE

I only recently discovered iGoogle, a free application in Google that allows you to customize the content of your home page. Key features include a variety of full-screen and minimizable gadgets like daily quotes, Google map search, itunes downloads, recipes, news from a variety of sources and much, much more! (I've got a "To Do" notepad, weather stats, calculator, verse-of-the-day and a thesaurus search currently

on mine.) You can even do a quick email check in your Gmail gadget, watch videos or play games in full screen mode. Moving around or reorganizing your gadgets can be done with just a click of the mouse and you can even create your own gadget to share with your friends or family members. Also customizable is the theme of your iGoogle home page with plenty of designs to choose from created by world-class artists and innovators like Tommy Hilfiger, Gucci, Dolce&Gabbana and Jimmy Choo. iGoogle.com

4. DAILYMAKEOVER.COM

Never guess what a new lipstick shade, hair color or style will look like on you again. With a \$29.95, 1-year membership to this online makeover studio, you can upload your photo and virtually try on thousands of

hairstyles and make-up looks. Bringing your stylist a picture of the cut you want is good, but how do you know Heidi Klume's new do will look good on you? Now you can take her look out for a test drive before a scissors ever touches your hair. DailyMakeover.com

5. TRUE BEAUTY

True beauty is what's on the inside...or is it? That's the premise behind the new reality TV show executive produced by Tyra Banks and Ashton Kutcher, *True Beauty*. Each week, ten "beautiful" men and women undergo a challenge





to determine who is the most beautiful of them all—and the winner of a \$100,000 prize and photo shoot in *People* magazine. The contestants assume they're being judged solely on their outer appearance, but—unbeknownst to them—they're also being evaluated on their inner beauty, with hidden cameras capturing their every move. O.k. so it's not 20/20, but this show does have its merits, if not for its pure entertainment value. *True Beauty* is my guilty pleasure of the mid-season TV.

6. MONAVIE

Ever feel like your get up and go has got up and went? If you're in search of some extra energy that's actually healthy for you (put down the *Red Bull!*), *MonaVie* may be for you. Made from 19 body-beneficial fruits from around the world, this tasty drink offers peak levels of antioxidants and phytonutrients to help your body function at optimal levels. The "secret" ingredient is the Brazilian Acai berry, one of the World's top "superfoods." After just one week on this drink I noticed a significant increase in my mood and energy levels.

brighart.com/
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7. RENT A TOY

Headquartered in San Diego, *rentAtoy* is the new "Netflix" for toys. This online membership based-service gives families access to all of their favorite toys on a monthly-rental basis. Fresh toys are delivered to your doorstep every month. At the end of the month, you simply ship the toys back (pre-paid postage supplied) and receive the next set of toys in your "Toy Chest." Plans start at just \$24.99 per month and are based on a fixed scale according to the number of toys that can be checked out at one time. From puzzles to pretend play to language learning DVDs to electronics, *rentAtoy* offers an array of children's toys and playtime activities from ages newborn to 8 years and older. There are also plans



available for businesses and special events. rentAtoy.com

8. MAKE-UP LOOK-ALIKES

Do you hate spending \$25 for a tube of your favorite lipstick or have you found "your" perfect color only to have it discontinued? At *Beauty Buzz.com*, you can find the names of many popular cosmetic brands/shades and their corresponding (cheaper) equivalents. Love Chanel's Rouge Noir Lipstick? Try *Wet'N'Wild's* Blackest Red. Can't find *Garden Botanika's* eye shadow in Chestnut (discontinued, I think) Try *Philosophy's* Humanity. Now *that's* beautiful! Beautybuzz.com/lookalikes

9. WALMART DIGITAL PHOTO CENTER

Getting prints or creating gifts from your digital photos has never been easier with the *Walmart Digital Photo Center*. Just upload your digital images to your account and order prints from wallet to poster size from just 9 cents a photo. You can also create and customize great gifts online

including calendars, clothes and accessories, cards, mugs, mouse pads, magnets, stationary and even photo coasters. The best part? You can have your order shipped to you or you can pick it up for free at your local *Walmart*, often by the next day. Walmart.com/Photo-Center.com

10. TEXTING

Texting is the new Instant Messaging. I use it for everything — confirming appointments; giving and getting directions; saying "hi" to friends when I don't have a lot of time to talk; even sending my husband a list of items we need from the grocery store. (It's also a great way to tell that someone special you are thinking of him/her. (I LOVE YOU.)

11. JUICE PLUS

I started taking *Juice Plus* after my GP recommended it. I was working long hours, my eating schedule was erratic and I was feeling run-down. It's been two years now and not only do I have increased energy, but I've never been sick, aside from the occasional headache. *Juice Plus* contains 17 fruits, veggies and grains and can be taken in a capsule, chewable or gummy (great for kids or people who have difficulty swallowing pills.) Adults can also sponsor a child between the ages of 6-15 to get their *Juice Plus* for free.

JuicePlus.com

12. PLAIN TART FROZEN YOGURT

Move over *Pinkberry*, my latest frozen yogurt obsession is *Plain Tart* from *Old Pacific Coffee House* in *Temecula*. Its non-fat, approximately 80 calories for a 4-oz. cup and *yum-my!* Other flavors offered include *Cappuccino*, *Mango Tango Sorbet* (which is dairy-free) and *Acai Berry*, made with real acai berries. (I'm told only one other store in the area carries this flavor.) A 4-oz. cup is \$1.50; a wide array of toppings including fresh fruit is also available. 951.301.9621

13. LAKER'S BASKETBALL

As of this writing, the *Lakers* are the #1 basketball team in the *NBA*. *Kobe* is arguably one of the best players that has ever played the game and last season's pick up of *Forward-Center Pau Gasol* had to be the best move in the league second to the *Boston Celtics'* acquisition of *Kevin Garnett*. But that was last year. This season, the *Lakers* are really playing team ball with players like a fully-recovered *Andrew Bynum* and small *Forward Trevor Ariza* stepping up to the plate. Both are hungry, play-making catalysts that will help position the *Lakers* for a *Championship* rematch against the *Celtics*—on our home court! NBA.com/lakers

14. SHOPPING CONSIGNMENT

Want to shop for clothes and accessories without spending a penny? Try consigning! Not your traditional thrift store, designer consignment boutiques like *My Girlfriend's Closet* in *Temecula* carry gently-worn name brand clothing at a fraction of their original price. (Some clothes have never even been worn and still have their original tags!) Not only are consignment stores like *MGC* a great place to shop, but they're also a great place to resell your high-end labels. Consignors receive a portion of the sales price of their merchandise that has sold (often for many more times than what you might receive at a garage sale) and then have the option of using that money towards their own store purchases. From a *Gucci* handbag to a *Diane Von Furstenberg* blouse to a *Juicy Couture* jogging suit, some of my



favorite clothes have been purchased ala consignment. MyGirlfriendsCloset.com

15. PIZZA FUSION

My new favorite pizza place is *Pizza Fusion* in *Temecula*. To be honest, they had me from the first bite. What's so different about this pizza place—and the reason for their great tasting food—is that it is all organic—which means everything, from the crust to the sauce to the cheese and the toppings are artificial-additive free. No pesticides, no preservatives, no antibiotics, no hormones. And you can

taste the difference! They even have vegan pizza options on their menu which also includes *ciabatta* sandwiches, salads, desserts and organic beers and wines. Try my personal favorite: a self-made, vegetarian combination of *sundried tomatoes*, *mushrooms* and *fresh spinach*. Out of this world! 951.506.8888 PizzaFusion.com

16. PHYTOLISSE

If your hair has more fly-aways than a revival of *Top Gun*, you need *Phytolisse* by *Phyto*. Recommended to me by my stylist, *Maria Vitale*,



this miracle product makes processed hair look like virgin hair again. The vitamin B-5 serum hydrates and strengthens your hair without weighing it down, leaving your hair shiny and behaving.' Phyto-usa.com

17. CHURCH

Call it the economy, my New Year's resolution or my over-worked conscience, but this year I decided to go back to church and I can't remember when I've been happier. There's something about coming together with other people—singing, listening, learning—and really connecting with God and my community—that gives me such inner strength. And I've found that for me, by focusing on my "purpose" rather than my problems, my priorities have become so much clearer.



18. PANDORA.COM

I just discovered this internet music website, although it's apparently been around for years. What's so great about this site, besides the incredible selection of genres, songs and artists there are to choose from, is the way it does your "deejaying" for you.

Just input a name of an artist or song and Pandora analyzes its musical attributes and plays similar songs/artists for you. Artists ranging from the popular to obscure—even great new stuff coming out of studios, clubs and garages around the world—are accessible. I've created 12 "stations" based on my musical tastes ranging from Marvin Gaye to Michael Buble to Duffy that I can change whenever my mood does. Pandora.com

19. A RENEWED POSITIVITY

Since the Presidential inauguration, I've seen a real change in people's attitude. There seems to be a renewed positivity in the air—a sense of everyone pulling together and helping each other through this challenging economy. For the first time in a long time, I think people have hope that things are going to change...for the better. And whether you're a Democrat or a Republican or an Independent, that's something I think we can all agree on. When our country fully rebounds—and it will—I hope this feeling

of patriotism, optimism and goodwill will remain.

20. STARFALL.COM/ SPROUTONLINE.COM

If you have young, elementary school aged kids, I encourage you to have them check



out two great educational websites: Starfall.com and Sproutonline.com. Designed for children in pre-K thru the second grade, Starfall helps kids learn how to read and develops reading and writing skills in young readers. The website for the PBS Kid's channel, Sprout features coloring pages, games, craft ideas and other fun activities like learning sign language and yoga poses. Both websites are favorites of my second-grade daughter, making them 100% "kid approved."

21. MY PETS

Now, more than ever, I'm loving my pets. I have two rescue dogs that were both abused before I adopted them, but they are the most affectionate and grateful animals you will ever meet. Kobe and Annie

have shown me the courage of a resilient spirit and the power of unconditional love. If I could adopt another dog I would in a heartbeat... but then my husband would have nowhere to sleep! animalfriendsofthevalleys.com UTS

