

# Rise and shine

Our experts put household metal polishes to the test

The family silver may be dwindling but look around the home to see what's taking its place — antique brass bedsteads, copper and stainless steel pans, chrome kitchen accessories and pewter tankards — all of which require more than just a wipe with a duster or damp cloth if they are to keep their good looks.

We tested a range of metal polishes recommended for household use, four for silver and four suitable for other metals such as brass, copper, stainless steel and even other surfaces such as ceramic hobs, tiles and Perspex. We were able to test all of these at Prideaux Place, in Padstow, Cornwall, home of Peter and Elisabeth Prideaux-Brune. Our thanks to them for allowing us access to their family heirlooms.

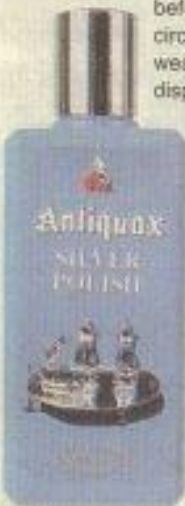
The best all-round polish was Peek — it was pleasant to use and highly effective on virtually all metals and household surfaces, including silver. It's also good on grease, fingermarks, water stains and so on, and contains ingredients to help retard tarnishing.

The best silver polish was the least expensive — Sainsbury's own-brand High Performance with 'fast polishing action'. Good results were so easy to obtain that polishing became a pleasure rather than a chore.

Sally Major

## Antiquax Silver Polish, £3.49 for 200ml

This citrus-scented liquid is formulated to inhibit tarnishing. Apply with a soft cloth, allow to dry for 30 seconds or so before buffing with small, circular actions — if you wear cotton or thin, disposable gloves, you can delay tarnishing and finger marks for even longer. Pleasant to use with results that are comparable to the Sainsbury's polish, but not quite as rapid in achieving the same finish. Call 0161-627 0983 for stockists. **Rating (out of five): ★★★★★**



## Spray Silver Polish, £5.50 for 250ml, Town Talk Polish Co

Town Talk's extensive range of silver-care products includes this pump-action spray containing a non-toxic, lightly perfumed cream. It was initially fairly slow to take effect, but rapidly achieved good results once the tarnish had started to lift. Recommended for cutlery and tableware, but is just as effective on larger, flatter items. Longer-lasting results can be obtained by final buffing with Town Talk's Silver Polishing Cloth. For stockists, call 01204 520014. **Rating: ★★★★★**



## Bar Keepers Friend, £1.85 for 200g, Home-care Products

The only powder cleaner in the test. The 100-year-old formula, based on rhubarb leaves, is slightly abrasive when applied with a damp cloth, so it is not suitable for highly polished stainless steel. As such a general surface stain remover as a metal polish, we found it adequate on stainless steel, brass and copper, but disappointing on aluminium and pewter. Utensils needed a good rinse before use. For stockists, call 0181-871 5027. **Rating: ★★★**



## High Performance Silver Polish, £1.45 for 200ml, Sainsbury's

Pale yellow fluid containing white spirit with a hint of ammonia, suitable for use on both silver and silver plate. Our testers were impressed, finding it gave an immediate, practically effortless shine to dull silver. Stubborn sulphur marks (from Brussels sprouts) disappeared with the minimum amount of pressure — essential for not wearing away more silver than is necessary. For details, call 0800 636262. **Rating: ★★★★★**



## Swiss Cleaner, £3.95 for 150g, Kuhn Rikon

Pleasant-smelling cream, pale green in colour with the consistency of very soft soap, water-soluble and safe to use around food. It also proved to be economical, with a little going a long way. Good on stainless steel and pewter, excellent on copper and ceramic hobs. The cleaner virtually disappeared during the polishing, so it needed only a quick rinse before a final wipe with a dry cloth. For stockists, call 01902 458410. **Rating: ★★★★★**



## Peek, £2.95 for 50g, Tri-Peek International

This pale blue, almost odourless cream is already widely used in industry and is now available for domestic use. Recommended for all metals, including gold, silver and platinum as well as copper, brass, steel and so forth — with the exception of anodised finishes such as aluminium. Really impressive results. Particularly successful on copper and polished aluminium. An aerosol version is also available. For stockists, call 01489 877995. **Rating: ★★★★★**



## Steel Fix, £3.99 for 250ml, Horwood Homewares

Thin, white cream with a delicate scent, formulated primarily for stainless steel saucepans (recommended by Stellar and Judge for their cookware) but also suitable for chrome-plated fittings — for example, cooker trims, taps and kitchen accessories. Claims to remove bacteria as well as stains. After good results on stainless steel it performed adequately on pewter, copper and brass. For stockists, call 0117 940 0000. **Rating: ★★★★★**



## Goddard's Long Term Silver Pad, £2.55 for 170g

Silver Pad is claimed to be the modern alternative to wedding. It is a soapy red paste applied with a damp sponge (supplied in the tub) over and around more intricate silver, the resulting foam penetrating hard-to-reach places. We found the lather didn't always reach the tiniest nooks but, although it worked rather slowly and needed some pressure on the most stubborn stains, it was reasonably effective. For stockists, call 01276 852000. **Rating: ★★★**

