

**NEW SEASON!  
NEW FASHION!  
493  
HOT NEW LOOKS**



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## PLASTIC SURGERY IN A JAR? BOTOX IN A BOTTLE? DOES THE FUTURE REALLY LOOK BETTER? ASKS MIMI SPENCER

When I was about 16, I visited a boyfriend in hospital. He'd had his nose done – a consequence of a rampant football rivalry than an attack of the venereal. I remember creeping to his bedside, in Florence Nightingale mode, bearing gifts. And there he was, snout packed with wadding, and prone sneezing – no, kidding – out from beneath the bandages and onto the floor below. It was Reservoir Dogs: it was south central L.A. on a bad night: it was certainly enough to put me off the whole idea of plastic surgery for the rest of my days. And this is from a woman who has since been told, 'you'd be quite attractive if your nose wasn't quite so, you know, huge.' Today, even with modern science being so darn clever, there's still no way to make your

nose more compact and bijou other than to undergo the surgeon's scalpel. But lesser cosmetic alterations – which would once have entailed a general anaesthetic and two weeks in Tahoe away from prying eyes – can now be done without the pain of an operation. The methods are low risk and low cost. Using pharmaceutical-grade ingredients and equipment that NASA might covet, they often require no recovery time at all.

Unsurprisingly, as the procedures have become less traumatic, so our desperation to perfect ourselves has grown. Botox currently spend around £200m a year on a range of 'improvements', 400 per cent higher than 10 years ago. Manhattanites now talk of 'zero tolerance' on wrinkles; 25-year-olds are experts on 'cell turnover'; you can grab a glycolic peel

in your lunch hour and fix your wrinkles with a syringe of collagen, Restylane, Perlane, NewFill or Botox. You can renovate your buttocks with intensive core-level massage or contour your abdomen with vitamin injections. And while you'll find many of the new anti-ageing treatments – like microdermabrasion blasting small particles in the skin to slough off its top layer) – on the menu next to the leg waxing, beyond the beauty salon has emerged a new breed of clinics dubbed 'mini-spas'. Specialising in quick-fix, anti-ageing and body-enhancing treatments, these are slick places pumped full of hope for your poor Baggypuss of a face, run by doctors who can see the charms within.

Take the celebrated Dr Butznan, Dr B! of the Radical Beauty Clinic in London's Harley Street. This effervescent aesthetic surgery expert practised in France for two decades, and in a year at the Radical has treated more wrinkles and buttocks than he'd care to mention. Right now, he's mad about Bio-Alkamid, a soon-to-arrive implant for cellulites and deep wrinkles – which can be removed if the patient hates the result. Or Aurora, a radio-frequency flash lamp currently only available in France, which can zap hair and blemishes, boost collagen and walk the dog (well, almost). Another of his hot tips is a fat-dissolving cocktail of enzymes, soya extracts and caffeine called Lipo-Dissolve (available at the Advanced Clinical Cosmetology Centre in London), which promises to fix bingo wings after a few sessions. Meanwhile, at some clinics, the truly obsessive can cast for a spot of Armpit Botox to banish sweat stains, apparently, although a bit of antiperspirant seems the obvious alternative, or techniques to reverse dodgy lip implants (go, Leslie, go!).

The choice is immense, and the results, says Dr B, intense. 'The difference is just a decade amazing. There is so much available, whether it's hormones, lasers or enzymes. People don't want to spend two weeks in bandages, but they do want results.'

However, some believe that there are dangers in leaps of technology. Constance Campion of London's Award Practice, who has been involved in rejuvenation procedures for 17 years, warns, 'Hundreds of doctors have jumped on the bandwagon. It's a lucrative business. This is cutting-edge science, not a pamper session at the local salon. Beauty therapists who don't even know the anatomy of the head shouldn't be let loose on a microdermabrasion machine. No one's taking stock of the situation: a strict ethical code and trade standard must be established.'

In the meantime, there are plenty of new procedures to try at home. Take Clarins' new Model Bust (205) – a system of rubber-rolling and pneumatic nozzles designed to firm the boobs. Apparently, you shove your tender globes into said apparatus, attach the other end to the cold tap, and the 'rotation flanges will massage the breast in the rhythmic

whirlpool of water'. This sounds like a cross between a medieval witch torture and a 50s kitchen appliance. Yet Clarins promises results after the very first week, and, Lord knows, if you're a double-A cup you'll do anything to make the damn things perk up.

For the less flamboyant, there is now a pill that promises to turn your gut bites into something worth talking about. Erdic (enq 0945 604 0274) is a supplement containing phytoestrogens, which apparently stimulate the breasts to mimic the effects of pregnancy. 'After three months, my breasts became firmer and fuller,' reports 50-year-old journalist Sally Farnlow. 'I have to say I was amazed... Jeremy [her partner] calls them my weapons of mass destruction.' Oh, lucky Jeremy.

Of course, any non-invasive treatment that promises the world should be taken with a handful of salt. For my money, there are only four things that actually get rid of cellulite: exercise, drinking water, liposculpture and cutting your legs off at the hip. That said, endermologia (using rollers and suction to break up fat cells, available at Cacl International) is said to 'actually reduce the appearance' of it. And some of the new skin-smoothing techniques really do appear to work. Injectables – such as NewFill (available at Laurence Kirwan in London, which uses polyactic acid to stimulate collagen production – are the latest buzzwords. Botox is still the most popular cosmetic procedure in the UK ('because it works!') says Campion – though alternatives are on the rise. VitaFace (available at Radical Beauty) is designed to increase production of new cells and involves anaesthetising the face, then injecting with vitamins, selenium and hyaluronic acid (the fluid under the skin that diminishes with age, leaving us looking like our mums).

Meanwhile, having your face re-faced is all the rage in the States. The upper layer of your skin is dermaplaned off, using a Teflon-coated blade it sounds very Hannibal Lecter, but the upshot is a face that is more calm, plump and less rocky outcrop. Or there's the Crystal Clear microdermabrasion facial: a face of Victoria Beckham, who once – if you remember – had the skin of an ostrich handbag. Now she looks all glossy and smooth, like J.Lo or a barn egg, thanks to blasts of aluminium-oxide crystals. I tried its sister treatment, a Crystal Clear Oxygen facial – where oxygen is pumped into the skin – at Linda Meredith's salon in Knightsbridge and felt it Marine afterwards. McOutcheon's a fan of the treatment, along with Madonna and old smoothie Jude Law.

And the variety and efficacy of non-invasive treatments grows. There's NaturalLift (enq 0800 073 0430), a machine that gives you a facial using electric currents and glycolic acid (as tried by Sade and SJP); and Radiance (enq 0945 057 3111), a facial using a machine that gives your skin a workout and stimulates collagen production. It's a sign of our spiralling desire for eternal youth, our attachment to the surface and increasing lack of interest in what lies beneath. But offer me a fresh new, low-risk face for the price of a washing machine (and far less hassle to install, and my odd philosophising goes out the window. And it's getting easier still. Prepare yourself, for treatment-based creams available soon. 'There'll be lab coats at the counter rather than shopgirls showing you samples,' she says. 'Big, big, big!' says Deborah Walters, senior vice president of Saks Fifth Avenue, of the potential market for medically supervised treatment creams. The first of the new breed is Lancôme's Resolution

**DREAM CREAM**  
The beauty industry's set to give us that faux-totx feeling – in a jar. We roosted a shelf full for three weeks to see how they delivered...



**CAPTURE** BOTOX-INSPIRED VISIBLE CREAM (30g) BY PARISIAN COSMETOLOGIE  
The not-so-huge microdermabrasion look after using it, but do make my skin look more plump and glowing. Needs daily use on the skin.

**VISIBLE RELAX (20g) BOTOX**  
It does soften fine lines and wrinkles, but only if you don't rub the big ones. And you need to keep using this day and night for it to really work!

**NO SURGETICS** (30g) BY VITAMIN C  
Both the face cream and eye cream give lasting hydration, but I can't say that my wrinkles disappeared!

**CREAMING PLUMP PERFECT** MOISTURE CREAM (50g) BY BIODERMA  
I've often a theory right out on the loose and tight, but this delicious-smelling moisturiser made my face feel dewy and soft and relaxed.

**PRECISION** HYDRA-CORRECTION EYE (15ml) BY CHANEL  
This left my eye area looking fresh, radiant and ultra-moisturised all day long. What's more, it comes in a chic little square pot. Totally Chanel!

0800 073 0430), a machine that gives you a facial using electric currents and glycolic acid (as tried by Sade and SJP); and Radiance (enq 0945 057 3111), a facial using a machine that gives your skin a workout and stimulates collagen production. It's a sign of our spiralling desire for eternal youth, our attachment to the surface and increasing lack of interest in what lies beneath. But offer me a fresh new, low-risk face for the price of a washing machine (and far less hassle to install, and my odd philosophising goes out the window. And it's getting easier still. Prepare yourself, for treatment-based creams available soon. 'There'll be lab coats at the counter rather than shopgirls showing you samples,' she says. 'Big, big, big!' says Deborah Walters, senior vice president of Saks Fifth Avenue, of the potential market for medically supervised treatment creams. The first of the new breed is Lancôme's Resolution

D-Contract, the result of a decade of research. Think of it as a jellous Botox. A serum containing manganese gluconate is said to smooth the skin by relaxing the 'internal structures that hold expression lines in place'. This little piece of magic is yours for just £45 and can be used in the intimacy of your own home. Go on, you have nothing to lose but your crown's feet. I might even give this one a go myself. ■

This way for the best, low-invasion extreme procedures  
Advanced Clinical Cosmetology Centre, London NW1; enq (020) 7486 8087  
Award Plastic Surgery Practice, London SW5; enq (020) 7371 2340  
Eosion Clinic, London W2; enq (020) 7229 3904  
Cacl International, Middlesex; enq (020) 8731 5676  
Laurence Kirwan, London W1; enq (020) 7909 3860  
Linda Meredith, London SW3; enq (020) 7225 2755  
Radical Beauty Medical Clinic, London W1; enq (020) 7487 3220