

the report

the new age of ageless

A combination of resurfacing lasers, firming radio frequency and minute amounts of Botox and filler promise to make frozen foreheads and puffed-up lips a thing of the past. *Olivia Falcon* investigates whether the new cosmetic prescription really can deliver complexion perfection

The wind of change is breezing through the cosmetic doctor's office, carrying us away from the dreaded wind-tunnel face of old to a far fresher look, as many of the world's top doctors use less Botox and facial fillers. The reason? "The days of relying on just one treatment to bring back the glory of your youth are over," says Geneva-based cosmetic doctor Phillip Levy. "Now it's about cleverly combining treatments for softer, more natural-looking results."

Botox and fillers: the new rules

When Botox arrived on the beauty scene in the early 1990s, it was such a novelty that many physicians went overboard, creating stiff, corpse-like faces that turned stomachs rather than heads. Twenty-five years on and more conservative approaches are afoot. "If you look at the way news anchorwomen have matured over the last decade, you can see how the trend for a lighter touch has evolved," says surgeon Rajiv Grover (rajivgrover.co.uk). "A decade ago it was peaked eyebrows and frozen foreheads; now they have the Media Brow Treatment, which treats frown lines by strategically injecting the area around the side of the eyes and occasionally in the hairline. The forehead is left alone so presenters can still show emotion by lifting their eyebrows, without the angry scowl."

Waffles Wu, (waffleswu.com), one of Asia's leading surgeons, is the pioneer of Micro Botox, a clever technique that delivers Botox into the skin in micro-droplets to target superficial layers of muscle without affecting the deep tissue. "Micro Botox is the best of both worlds," says Wu. "It gives you wrinkle-free skin with movement, which lasts up to four months." Wu also uses Micro Botox on the lower face and neck to lift jowls, sharpen jawlines and reduce neckbands (rings of skin that sag around the neck caused by weakened platysmal muscles). "This technique has the effect of a neck lift but without the surgery," he says.

Botox is also being used in new ways to increase the efficacy of other cosmetic procedures. "Clinical findings show that by treating the face with Botox about two weeks before having Fraxel [a type of resurfacing laser

which reaches only the top layers of the skin to remove pigmentation and firm] you get a much better skin-tightening effect," reports Dr Nick Lowe of the Cranley Clinic (drnicklowe.com). "The idea is that if you pre-treat with Botox you get a far more 'rested' skin that is not being folded and wrinkled by muscles, so the effects of the laser last about six months longer."

Similarly the use of facial fillers has been evolving. A few years ago it used to be about chasing individual lines, but now doctors have a greater understanding of the aging process and aim to treat the cause of the lines. At the Phi Clinic in London, the 8 Point Lift – a technique that lifts facial sagging with small doses of hyaluronic acid filler at eight strategic points on the face (along cheekbones, jawline and at the corners of the mouth) – is a huge hit with women in their late forties or early fifties who are not yet ready to go under the knife; the treatment gives instant lift and results last up to 24 months. (phiclinic.com)

GOOD TO KNOW: Four days before any injectable treatment, avoid taking fish oil supplements, aspirin or any kind of arthritis medication as all of these have a tendency to thin the blood, which can lead to bruising.

The power trio: lasers, light therapy and radio frequency

Doctors are now combining different kinds of laser, peel and light treatments in impactful medi-facials, which tackle issues such as uneven skin tone, fine lines and wrinkles in just one sitting, without the discomfort or downtime that follow from higher strength individual procedures. New York dermatologist Dr David Colbert (nydermatologygroup.com) is one of the pioneers of this type of combination therapy, with his three-step, 30-minute Triad facial, consisting of microdermabrasion, toning laser treatment and a gentle peel for radiant skin. Colbert's protégé and London counterpart Dr Costas Papageorgiou, who offers a new Hybrid Medical Facial at Michael John MediSpa, explains: "Skin aging is multi-layered from the epidermis down to the dermis, so mixing different energy waves >

NECK AND NECK

To keep your neck youthful, raise your computer to eye level, sleep as flat as you can bear and apply a neck cream right up to the front and back of the ears, where the body has important glands that help detoxify. Try Sarah Chapman's Neck and Chest Rejuvenating Complex, \$95, at Net-A-Porter.com

Black Ecstasy Mascara, \$32, and Crema Nera Extrema Daycream, \$385, both by Giorgio Armani
Dress by Vionnet, \$3,650

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and technologies such as LED light and radio frequency to tighten and re-texture the skin is the way forward, as each component reaches a different level of skin."

Dr Harold Lancer (lancerskincare.com), based in Beverly Hills, has devised a skin-firming treatment – a so-called Oscars Facial – that uses a rapid Picoway laser (that creates a sonic vibration in the skin to stimulate collagen), with a Venus Viva radio frequency treatment, combined with a magnetic pulse that makes it virtually painless. At this year's Oscars he prepped 22 celebrities for the red carpet and counts Victoria Beckham, Reese Witherspoon and Sofia Vergara among his many regular A-list clients. A dermatologist by profession, he adds (without a trace of one-upmanship): "Plastic surgeons used to be the heroes in Hollywood, but now it is the dermatologists."

"But lasers should be used in moderation," warns Colbert. "A strong one like Fraxel should be done just two to three times per year, maximum." Also, he advises, choose your practitioner carefully: "Lasers are medical devices so best to see a medical professional rather than a local aesthetician who is also doing your nails. A doctor is like a senior mechanic who checks the plane before it takes off – and that's the level of expertise you need here." GOOD TO KNOW: Lasers react to about 100 different medications including some antibiotics, so be honest about what you are taking at your pre-treatment consultation. Even a herbal remedy such as St John's Wort triggers a reaction that makes skin vulnerable to laser burns.

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