



what price **beauty**?

By Olivia Damavandi

Not too much, with these non-surgical alternatives for achieving youth and beauty

Mankind's eternal quest for the fountain of youth has produced some interesting results. Taking a hint from that infamous scene in "There's Something About Mary," in which Cameron Diaz uses some of Ben Stiller's "hair gel," salons in London now offer ninety- to one hundred-forty dollar bull sperm hair treatments that supposedly leave your mane feeling softer and thicker. And while the nightingale has for centuries been treasured by the Japanese for its sweet song, it is now also prized for its droppings. That's right—women in New York City are raving about one-hundred-eighty-dollar facials using nightingale excrement, a traditional Japanese beauty enhancer that leaves skin smooth and supple. In Los Angeles, there's "hysteria" for another anti-aging weapon: imitation snake venom, which, at one hundred eighty-five dollars an ounce, temporarily paralyzes face muscles by blocking neurotransmitters that tell them to contract. Think injection-free Botox.

Malibu has also become a haven for the latest surgery-free skin care technology, from nonsurgical nose jobs to gold-flecked facials, that will help make one seem younger and, well, more attractive, without having to go under the knife.

Like calorie-free ice cream, surgery-free rhinoplasty might sound too good to be true. But at Veronica Spa and Skin Care Center, Dr. Alexander Rivkin, M.D., has put nasal nightmares to rest by pioneering the nonsurgical nose job. The procedure resolves the appearance of bumps, drooping tips and crookedness by injecting the nose with fillers (a temporary one called Radiesse made from calcium and cellulose, or a permanent one called Artefill comprised of plastic and collagen) to make it straighter. Since developing the operation six years ago, Rivkin has performed more than one thousand nonsurgical nose jobs on numerous patients, some of whom, he said, have flown in from Switzerland, Trinidad, Russia and Saudi Arabia. The temporary nose job lasts one year and costs one thousand dollars, and the permanent one costs two thousand, which—in comparison to a surgical rhinoplasty averaging eight thousand to twenty-five thousand—are attractive alternatives. Another advantage of the procedure is its speedy recovery time. “There’s minimal bruising or swelling and you walk out the office with a straight nose,” Rivkin said, adding that the only requisite is that patients avoid wearing sunglasses for a week after the operation.

antioxidant protection immediately resulting in clearer, more beautiful skin. One treatment improves the appearance of fine lines, wrinkles, enlarged pores, acne and brown spots, leaving the skin looking dewy and hydrated for weeks, and can be repeated once a month. Cure Malibu also offers an Oxygen Facial, a popular treatment that eliminates the bacteria that causes acne. This relaxing facial infuses the skin with a series of serums and vitamins, and then suffuses it with oxygen through a special machine, which feels like an airbrush. “After your first Oxygen Facial, you see results right away. But over time, it helps eliminate acne altogether,” Megan James, spa director at Cure Malibu, said.

Your skin can also reap the benefits of oxygen with the American-tronic Facial at Malibu Laser and Skin Care. This four-hundred-dollar facial, which has been featured on television shows like “Oprah” and “10 Years Younger,” is especially beneficial for those older than twenty-five with all skin types, and can be done in monthly intervals, Dr. Mary Lee Amerian, M.D., said. It consists of a microdermabrasion to exfoliate the skin, followed by a light glycolic acid peel to freshen. The skin is then penetrated by a collagen ampoule, with ultrasound, to nourish and firm. Next, a microcurrent is used to stimulate the facial muscles, followed by a mask to rejuvenate, hydrate and tighten the skin. Lastly, oxygen and vitamins are infused into the skin.



If you're in the mood for a little bling, Veronica Spa and Skincare Center also offers a 24 Karat Gold Facial, which mixes 24-karat gold with Gamma-polyglutamic acid from fermented soybeans to firm the skin and even pigmentation. At three hundred dollars, this one-and-a-half-hour facial is popular among celebrities for red carpet events, as it “gives skin a translucent, golden glow that lasts about a week,” skincare center owner Veronica Barton-Schwartz said.

Cure Malibu, a boutique spa tucked away on Malibu Road and at the Malibu Beach Inn, offers a variety of some of the most advanced medical spa treatments, including the Hydrafacial, the newest advance in nonlaser skin resurfacing to slow down the skin's aging process. At two hundred dollars an hour, this facial combines cleansing, exfoliation, extraction, hydration and

While none of these skin care treatments may seem low-cost, Amerian said the economic recession has helped to boost their popularity. “What we have seen is a significant reduction in the number of expensive, cosmetic procedures that are being done, such as facelifts,” she said. “Instead of facelifts, patients are having less expensive, and also less invasive, cosmetic procedures. This allows patients to still obtain the facial rejuvenation and tightening that they desire but at much lower cost and with much more rapid recoveries.”

So, whether you're going for just a freshener, or a procedure that will have your skin looking smoother, and even younger, Malibu has cutting-edge beauty treatments to fit your budget and lifestyle. What price beauty? Not much at all—and it's worth it. >