

Super facials

With secret serums, electric currents and oxygen jets, these new treatments promise perfect skin

by Alice Hart-Davis

A FACIAL used to be little more than a spot of in-depth pampering that left your face clean and well-moisturised. But, these days, if a treatment is to be worth the financial splurge, it has to give results. Hence the rise of the super-facial — expensive yet effective procedures from both companies and individual therapists that promise better skin in your lunch break.

BY ROYAL APPOINTMENT

Oxygen facial, from £65, salons nationwide, call 08705 934 934 or visit crystalclear.co.uk

WHAT'S SO SUPER ABOUT IT? Known to be effective, this was the treatment that Kate Middleton chose to have a few days before her wedding. The oxygen kills surface bacteria on the skin, so is great for quelling breakouts.

WHAT'S IT LIKE? A stream of tiny particles is blasted at the skin to leave it smooth. It's not that enjoyable, but it doesn't take long. The oxygen treatment that follows isn't relaxing either, but it works.

ON THE HIGH STREET

Clarins pro Tri-Active Facial, nationwide, from £62, clarins.co.uk

WHAT'S SO SUPER ABOUT IT? Five years of development have resulted in a series of special sequences of massage movements and six treatments designed to lift, hydrate or detox the face with Clarins products.

WHAT'S IT LIKE? I tried the lifting line smoother facial, which was extremely calming. I drifted off in a delicious haze of massages and the scents of aromatic products.

BOOSTED BY VITAMINS

Bespoke facial with therapist Katherine Sen, from £85, at Fiona and Marie Aesthetics, fionamarie.co.uk and [siama.org](http://siama.siama.org)

WHAT'S SO SUPER ABOUT IT? A

facial using Environ and Skinceuticals products, and a 'sono-probe' that uses pulses of electric current to encourage delivery of vitamins A, C and E to revive the skin.

WHAT'S IT LIKE? Full of surprises, from the tingling electricity of the probe to the cocooning of the algae-based mask that covered my eyes and mouth. Left my skin glowing, plumped up and even toned.

THE SKIN MAGICIAN

From £120 for 90 minutes with Skinceuticals therapist Una Brennan, 020 7313 9333

WHAT'S SO SUPER ABOUT IT? Using her talented hands and a selection of Skinceuticals potions, Una will deep-cleanse and rehydrate your face.

WHAT'S IT LIKE? Extraordinary.

Leaves skin luminous: It's very relaxing, as it includes a massage, too.

THE FULL WORKS

Bespoke facial from Sarah Chapman, from £125, 020 7589 9585, sarahchapman.net

WHAT'S SO SUPER ABOUT IT? Sarah's understanding of cosmetic science has evolved into bespoke facials to optimise results.

WHAT'S IT LIKE? Made-to-measure. Watch out for exfoliation with tingling salicylic acid peels and the Dermaroller (the many-spiked roller that pricks the skin, to stimulate collagen formation while helping products to penetrate deeper).

Light relief comes in the form of skin-boosting Omnilux LED red-light therapy and massage.

Astounding results — my face looked clearer and much more healthy.

HIGH-TECH REPAIRS

Katherine Jackson, from £150, 020 7371 0444, katherinejackson.co.uk

WHAT'S SO SUPER ABOUT IT? Cutting-edge laser facial machine promotes non-invasive tissue repair in the face. Expect to see improvements in acne, broken capillaries, open pores and scars.

WHAT'S IT LIKE? Treatments begin with a deep cleanse using sound energy — pores are unblocked with no discomfort.

Then, an ultrasound machine is used to press Katherine's custom-blended secret serum into the skin, increasing collagen production. A treatment for those in the know.



STYLING: CAMILLA PERRY; MAKEUP: PEGGY / FREDERIC FAYRE

The latest concealers WE RECOMMEND

Clinique Airbrush Concealer, £16, clinique.co.uk

THE concealer was quickly dispensed and it illuminated the complexion.

STAR BUY



RMK super basic liquid concealer, £24, lookfantastic.com

A THICK wash of concealer, which painted over fine lines and blotchy skin. Left skin looking smooth.



L'Oréal Paris true match touché magique concealer, £7.19, Boots

BLENDED into skin well. A strong bristled brush that allowed thicker coverage.



Pixi Wakeup concealer, £9, asos.com

GREAT selection of colours. Problem areas, such as under the eyes, were immediately smoothed and brightened.

DON'T BOTHER

Dainty Doll concealer pen, £12.95, lookfantastic.com

RUBS in easily, but we needed a lot of this for good coverage and so you might have to keep reapplying pens.



Rituals Lighten Up concealer, £12.99, John Lewis

COVERED up dark eye bags to an extent, but it looked a little patchy and needed careful application.

I'm scared of intimacy after nine years alone

QUESTION: To the outside world I look confident and successful, so people are surprised I don't have a partner. But I haven't had a sexual relationship for nine years, since the boyfriend I was with in my 30s turned out to be a cheat. It took me five years to trust a man again, but when we tried to have sex I was too nervous to go through with it and he called me frigid. Now I am so scared of more rejection I back off when men like me. I don't want to die without having proper, loving sex again. What can I do?

ANSWER: Yours is a heartbreaking story and the saddest part is you now feel there's something at fault with you.

In actual fact you've had a completely normal reaction to two unusually cruel men. The fact that your boyfriend turned out to be a cheat must have left you reeling with shock and self-doubt.

There's a tendency to blame yourself for not detecting the lies. Instead, you retreated



to lick your wounds and then met another brute, who rubbed fresh salt in them.

Wanting to take sex slowly does not mean you are 'frigid' — which is a hateful term, used in my experience only by men who are inept lovers. Who doesn't feel frozen and withdrawn when not warned by kindness? Under the circumstances, your decision to

withdraw from the dating arena is totally understandable. Some people protest that the best cure for heartache is 'getting back in the saddle', but plenty of souls wonder if the risks are really worth it.

Sexual abstinence is less talked about in our society than sexual intercourse, but many people choose, like you, to opt out of the relationship game for a long time. There is nothing unnatural about waiting until you feel cherished and secure within yourself before risking intimacy again.

Although almost everyone feels vulnerable when they are in bed with a new love interest, it seems to me your confidence has been so badly dented that you would be well advised to get some professional counselling (try the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy's website).

You might also try talking to some of your closest friends. I think you will be surprised by how many women have

similar stories and by how protective your friends will be. Enlist their support in helping you find a trustworthy man. There's nothing wrong with a bit of vetting from your pals.

I would also advise taking things very slowly indeed and, if you meet someone who seems kind and committed, there's no shame in telling him your story.

Many chivalrous men actively relish the thought of rescuing a damsel from your kind of distress. There are plenty of men who are versed in relaxation techniques, such as massage, foreplay and old-fashioned conversation.

If you can find someone who is happy to just hold hands and kiss for a few months (or longer) and who makes you laugh and feel comfortable, I am sure you can progress to a happy sexual relationship.

In fact, many say the ecstasy is all the more exquisite for the long waiting time of abstinence.