

WEARY FACES

THE SOLUTION New filler **Emervel** is hot off the block and already getting glowing reports from doctors who find it soft and easy to use. Designed to restore volume to the face (but avoiding the puffed-up pillow look), it's particularly popular with women and men who want a subtle pick-me-up before opting for a full-on facelift. An updated version of the two most popular fillers (Restylane and Juvéderm Ultra), Emervel works to swell cells with hyaluronic acid, a substance that acts like a magnet for moisture, attracting water from surrounding tissues and helping to give skin the desired volume. The whole thing is over in a flash: a 1mm-thick Pix'L cannula – a blunt-ended needle that reduces the risk of bruising – is taken down into the deep dermis (for fine lines) or below the muscle (best for cheek augmentation). At this stage, the filler is a sort of raw gel that seeps into cells, eventually softening as the water intake from surrounding capillaries increases. It's especially effective under cheekbones and around eye sockets (the first bits that start to look gaunt with age) and can also be used to fatten up thin lips and smooth out bony hands.

PAIN FACTOR Surprisingly minimal. Local anaesthetic is mixed in with the Emervel, which certainly takes the edge off. Nervous patients can have a topical cream applied beforehand, but as this can make the process considerably longer, the majority are happy to grin and bear it without.

DOWNTIME Fresh from the clinic, you might look a little flushed – this is a normal inflammatory response to the needle entering the skin – but mineral make-up can be used and swelling is rare. Avoid massaging skin for a few days as there's a slim chance that you could move the filler around. The best thing to do is to just forget about it completely.

RESULTS A procedure that promises great results, immediately. Skin looks better and better as the tissues become more hydrated, and will stay looking plumped-up and perky for around nine to 12 months.

WHO TO SEE Dr Ravi Jain at Riverbanks Clinic, East Hyde, Bedfordshire (riverbanksclinic.co.uk or 0844 704 7676), is one of the few doctors to pilot Emervel, and trains other doctors in its use. From £390.

RECEDING GUMS

THE SOLUTION The first permanent treatment to tackle unsightly gum lines, **AlloDerm** conceals exposed roots and minimises sensitivity in teeth. The procedure involves grafting new tissue straight onto a specific site where the gums have begun to recede, allowing the

blood supply to regenerate and help regrow the gums. If the amount of work is minimal, tissue can be taken from the patient's own palate; for bigger problems a matrix is used (human skin from a tissue bank, where the DNA and epidermis have been removed, leaving a collagen-rich tissue, free from cells that could cause rejection). Tissue type determined, treatment begins: existing gums are gently lifted and the graft secured. The gum tissue is then stretched back over and fixed in place with micro-fine stitches. It sounds scary but you'll have a local anaesthetic and it's a speedy service, taking only 20 minutes a tooth.

PAIN FACTOR A dull ache similar to having had a filling. Post-treatment, the mouth is bruised and tender, so antibiotics and anti-inflammatories are prescribed to reduce swelling and minimise the risk of infection.

DOWNTIME It takes a couple of days to get fighting-fit again, so book in for a Friday appointment and hibernate over the weekend. You'll need to limit speaking for 24 hours and resist the urge to poke the area with your tongue, as too much movement will disturb the stitches. Swill with antiseptic mouthwash to keep the area clean and don't touch your toothbrush for a week, if you can bear it.

RESULTS Instant and hugely gratifying. Previously exposed roots will be hidden, although the gum line will seem slightly bulky until the new tissue begins to mature. Teeth will look their best six to eight weeks after the grafting is done and results can last a lifetime if you go to the dentist and hygienist regularly.

WHO TO SEE Dr Simon Darfoor at Darfoor Dental Practice, 1 Harley Street, W1 (drsimondarfoor.com or 020 7580 2294). From £450.

CREPEY SKIN

THE SOLUTION A serious non-surgical treatment that comes all the way from cosmetic-surgery hub South Korea. The Dalek-like **Intracel** machine landed on our shores at the end of last year and has been snapped up by two hot-to-trot dermatologists – Rita Rakus in London and John Curran in the Channel Islands. On paper, the procedure is deeply unnerving: a cocktail of the most daunting (but remember, most effective), cutting-edge anti-ageing technologies – radiofrequency, fractional laser and needling. Hang on in there, though, because this really works and is brilliant at tackling hard-to-hide turkey necks and jowly chins. The appointment kicks off with an

application of anaesthetic cream to the soon-to-be-zapped area. It takes about an hour to properly numb the skin, so do bring your BlackBerry. The superfine gold needles on the Intracel device are then charged up with a radiofrequency current and applied to the skin, pinpricking their way over the furrows and lines to smooth them out. The current treats targeted parts of the dermis (under the skin) and doesn't burn or damage the epidermis (the top layer), so facial tissue is stimulated, collagen production is boosted and skin is tightened – yay!

PAIN FACTOR You might think this would hurt like hell, but our tester assures us it doesn't. At a push she said it stung a bit and smarted marginally more along her jawline than it did on the rest of her neck. Take a painkiller an hour before if you want to be on the safe side – Nuromol is the best.

DOWNTIME Downtime is blissfully minimal. No incisions, you see. Skin just looks a bit sunburnt and you are offered an ice pack at the surgery or a session under a cooling fan. You probably won't get away with going out that evening, but after a few days any pinkness will have died down and there is no dryness or flakiness.

RESULTS This is a step up from Thermage and Fraxel, and it's great if you don't want to take the leap to full-on surgery. A few days after treatment, everything starts to feel tighter and more toned, as if the skin is being gently pulled. The more sessions you have, the better – and younger – you look.

WHO TO SEE Dr Rita Rakus at 34 Hans Road SW3 (drritarakus.com or 020 7460 7324). From £600 an area. Dr Rakus recommends three to four treatments at six-week intervals for up to six months, followed by a yearly touch-up.

DARK CIRCLES

THE SOLUTION **Stylage** is a hyaluronic-acid filler used on the Continent that has now arrived at the office of Dr Elisabeth Dancey (who, incidentally, doesn't have a dark circle or wrinkle in sight). What's exciting is that **Stylage** contains mannitol, a powerful antioxidant and tissue expander used in hospital medicine for rehydration. The mannitol protects the filler from rapid degradation so it lasts longer, and also protects the tissues from the effect of the injection, so there is reduced swelling. Under the eyes, it works brilliantly to pad out hollows, thus eliminating dark shadows. The bespoke treatment begins with Dr Dancey examining you sitting up, as well as lying ▷

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◁ down, to get a better idea of how the skin hangs. She shines a bright light and a magnifying glass over your eyes to get to the root of the problems (there is rarely just one cause of dark circles). In our tester's case, it was a tripartite issue: first, early signs of volume loss resulting in a distinct indent under the eyes; secondly, a change in skin texture from bag to cheek (skin under the eyes can be up to 10 times thinner than facial skin); and, last but not least, a line of unfortunately placed freckles. Tackling the first problem would have the greatest impact on the overall appearance of the dark circles, so Dr Dancey got out the needle and administered a tear-trough filler with half a dozen tiny injections, followed by a mini massage under the eyes with anti-bruising cream. Our tester was then sent home with SkinCeuticals Pigment Regulator to help fade and even out the freckles.

PAIN FACTOR Really not bad. In fact, it was less sore than a flu jab, but with a little bit of localised swelling.

DOWNTIME None. Injections after **Stylage** typically swell for only a few hours, compared with a couple of days for many other fillers. The general consensus was that our tester just looked well rested and not stressed.

RESULTS There is still some discoloration, but that's never going to go completely. Other than that, eyes look brighter and more awake, and the results will last up to a year because of that magic mannitol.

WHO TO SEE Dr Elisabeth Dancey at the Bijoux Medi-Spa, 149 Ebury Street, SW1 (bijoux-medispa.co.uk or 020 7730 0765). From £350.



THE SOLUTION **Bespoke Scar Camouflage** is a form of permanent make-up (similar to brow-line and lip-line tattooing), but designed specifically for the breast and, in particular, the nipple area. Whether the need is down to spontaneous discoloration or the after-effects of having undergone surgery, there's a solution for every problem – it's very popular with women who are recovering from mastectomies or botched boob jobs. The technique means that areolas can be drawn on the breasts, with a combination of highlights, shadows and shading that create the optical illusion of a three-dimensional nipple protrusion. First up is a consultation to help determine shape, size and colour. Careful attention is paid to how the nipples change (yes, in the cold) to determine the most realistic shape, while a rainbow of different pigments are painstakingly mixed and tested on the skin to ensure the perfect colour. Finer details decided, the needles come out. What you'll

see are five very fine ones in a little row, cut at an angle and resembling a kind of metal paintbrush. These are inserted rapidly, running pigment through the skin in a sort of sewing motion – nipples can be darkened, odd areolas evened out and edges softened. All pigments are mineral-based and free from any chemical nasties, making them hypoallergenic and unlikely to cause a reaction.

PAIN FACTOR It differs tremendously (although the breasts contain fewer nerve endings than the face, so if you've had your lips or brows done before, this will be a breeze). In many cases, those who have had reconstructive work often experience little to no sensation at all.

DOWNTIME Less than a week. Breasts might feel slightly tender after the needling, but pure vitamin E cream – a fantastic cure-all ointment – is prescribed, which really jumpstarts the healing process. Take baths instead of showers and avoid getting water on the area until a fine crust (a mixture of pigment and platelets that protects the colour) has appeared after around 48 hours. Once this has flaked off (three to five days), you're good to go.

RESULTS A total transformation. Many women can feel quite emotional after having medical reconstruction – the results are staggeringly realistic and can help restore a sense of femininity. The colouring will fade over time (more rapidly if the area is exposed to the sun, so cover up on the ▷

