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IS A \$2,000 FACIAL WORTH IT?

New, derm-designed facials claim to deliver speedy rejuvenation with zero downtime. Emily Listfield investigates.

An entirely new category of treatments is entering the anti-aging arena: high-grade, high-tech—and, yes—high-priced medical facials that are redefining the very notion of what a facial is. These latest hybrids, usually performed by doctors, are about real results rather than mere relaxation, and promise long-term benefits along with the short-term glow. In large part, they are the result of advances in tools and techniques that enable several technologies—including lasers, radio-frequency and micro-current devices, light-emitting diodes (LEDs), chemical peels, and more—to be crammed into a single session instead of multiple visits. Even hybrids that include a good old-fashioned mask use newfangled micro-current devices

"We use the word 'facial,' but really it's about synergistic treatments," says David Colbert, M.D.

to help products penetrate deeper into the skin. "We use the word 'facial,' but really it's about synergistic treatments," says David Colbert, M.D., the go-to dermatologist in New York for Emma Stone and Sienna Miller. "We're working on the quality of skin, not just the surface layer, building volume and sculpting the lines of the jaw." And unlike more aggressive anti-aging treatments, there is little or no redness or peeling with these customized facials, so you can get up and glow that night. As you might expect, celebrities, top models, and fashion A-listers are all angling for appointments for these new hybrids. Before the last Victoria's Secret show in Paris, Adriana Lima, Lily Aldridge, Stella Maxwell, and Lameka Fox raced in for Colbert's brightening and lifting Runway Facial (\$2,000), which features five different technologies in a one-hour session, combining radio-frequency and infrared waves from the eTwo Sublime to lift and firm; microdermabrasion to remove dead skin cells; Laser Genesis for toning; a chemical peel; and red LED lights for brightening. Skin glows immediately after the treatment, but the real benefit lies in its ability to build collagen as well as to help prevent age spots and fine lines from developing. "For some of the Victoria's Secret models, we did the Runway Facial on their faces, legs, décolleté, arms, and necks. Some even wanted tightening around the belly button," says Colbert. Model Magdalena Frackowiak gets the facial before every big event and fashion shoot. "It not only gives me an extra glow; it tightens pores and renders my skin supersoft and tight," she tells *Bazaar*. For lasting results, Colbert recommends getting the facial every two months. Should the cost prove too staggering, choosing one or two of the individual treatment elements alone (say, microdermabrasion

will help maintain the glow. As with all facials, it's imperative to use sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 between visits.

Paul Jarrod Frank, M.D., Madonna's dermatologist of choice in New York, rebuffs any notion that these extravagantly priced facials are just for celebrities. "We're fully booked," he says. "They're great for people who don't have the luxury of taking time off from work or are afraid of more aggressive treatments." For some women, the hybrid facials are a way of avoiding injectables (i.e., Botox and hyaluronic acid fillers) or at least of buying time before starting them. Because so many techniques are fit into a single session, these hybrids can also function as a sampler of in-office anti-aging options that can then be cherry-picked for future visits based on your specific skin-perfecting needs.

Madonna opts for Frank's Build Repair

Polish (BRP) Medical Facial (\$1,500). The 30-minute, noninvasive procedure, customized for each client, starts with the Exilis Ultra, a device that combines ultrasound and radio frequency, aiming waves deep into the skin to build collagen and to tighten and tone. This is followed by Laser Genesis to repair sun damage, and is topped off with a wrinkle-softening polish using another laser, the Fraxel Perméa. "Each element is separately effective, but when you combine them they work on every layer of skin," explains Frank, adding, "You should only need this facial a few times a year." Which suddenly makes the high cost sound more reasonable if you consider that many women shell out \$150 to \$300 a month at their local spa for a basic maintenance facial.

For those who want an instant amped-up glow without any lasers, Frank's in-office aesthetician, Edyta Jarosz, offers the MDNA Skin Facial (\$800–\$1,200). The 90-minute treatment features the MDNA Skin skin-care

line, rich in minerals from thermal springs in the Tuscan town of Montecatini. "Madonna is obsessed with skin care," Frank says. (The line, currently available in Japan, is being developed by Frank and Jarosz in conjunction with Madonna, and will launch in the U.S. in September.) The multifaceted facial includes a volcanic clay mask removed by a magnetic device, micro-currents to tighten, and cold blasts of bacteria-busting oxygen aimed at your face while you lie under a range of flashing LED lights to boost collagen production, calm inflammation, and even out skin tone. It all feels very Disneyland, and while the results may not last as long as the laser facials, you will walk out with truly luminous, tightened, and toned skin on your face and neck. Belly buttons are optional. ■