



THE PORE POLICE

Their names are whispered, their phone numbers coveted. They're NYC's superfacialists, and as Sandra Ballentine finds, they're behind the best skin in town. Photographed by Patrick Demarchelier.

I heard about Georgia Louise from a jet-setting facial-addict friend with a bloodhound's nose for the latest and greatest skin whisperers. "You have got to try her chakra-healing treatment," she gushed. "You'll feel like you've been on holiday for a month, and you'll look ten years younger." Needless to say, I didn't walk, I ran. Louise, a recent transplant to New York from London, did not disappoint. After 90 minutes of magical ministrations that included meditation, massage, Reiki, Tibetan chimes (I'm still not sure what they do, but I like them), ultrasound pore cleaning, intense hydration, galvanic currents, and an LED light show, I slid, Gumby-like, out of her Upper East Side digs with an outrageously dewy and noticeably more lifted-looking complexion. On the way out, I bumped into Linda Evangelista. Uh-oh. In a city where news of a great aesthetician travels faster than a G6, I knew it wouldn't be long before I was competing with actresses, models, and other fashion types for quality time with my new BFF (best facialist forever). Sure enough, Evangelista told Gucci Westman, a makeup artist whose skin is so good she doesn't need makeup (or facials, ostensibly), who told Cameron Diaz. Then Emma Stone found out. And did I mention that Gucci tipped off Shalom Harlow and Karlie Kloss, too?

Within weeks of crossing the pond, Louise had cracked a formidable nut: the New York woman, who, let's face it, demands a lot more than "cream and steam" from her facial these days. Post-extraction blotches and bloody needle marks have gone the way of the Walkman. We want great-looking skin the way we want our coffee and taxis: now. Call it instant glowification. Of course, a little TLC doesn't hurt. "New York women are well researched and impeccably groomed," says Louise. "Their hair is smooth, their nails perfect, and they want the skin to match. They are also high-strung, stressed, emotional, and exhausted, so before we do anything, I relax them. Of course I love new technology and incorporate it into my facials, but I think the warmth, healing, and stimulation offered by the human touch is as powerful as a current or a laser. Together they make a pretty potent cocktail."

Not everyone has time for touchy-feely. Take Dangene, whose Institute of Skinovation sprawls across 6,000 square feet of midtown's Core Club. "Most of my clients have a need for speed," she says. "They want results and they want them

IT'S ELEMENTAL

Copper-based serums and creams are among the tricks of the trade facialists like Georgia Louise rely upon to soothe irritation post-treatment. Model Liu Wen wears a copper mask designed by Julien d'Ys. Hair, Julien d'Ys for Julien d'Ys; makeup, Gucci Westman for Revlon. *Sittings Editor: Phyllis Posnick.*

fast, with no downtime." She offers just about every type of laser and light you could want but doesn't believe in excess. "We want your skin to look and feel gorgeous, so we don't overpeel or overdo anything," she says. "We don't steam, either. In my opinion, it makes tissue soft and easily damaged. It's like a hot peach—if you push the skin, it will slide off." When I told her I needed to get my glow on for an event that evening, she prescribed head-to-toe diamond-tip microdermabrasion plus two passes over my face with the pore-tightening Aerolase laser, followed by fifteen minutes under her LED light machine, with the dial set to "party face." (Yes, party face!) I felt a bit like the Tin Man in *The Wizard of Oz* as I was whisked from room to room and forced to vacate comfy beds just as I was starting to doze off. But that evening, two friends asked me—who does my Botox.

Dermatologist David Colbert, M.D., created his 20-minute Triad treatment for busy clients like Rachel Weisz, Michelle Williams, and Naomi Watts. "New Yorkers have better things to do than wait two hours for someone to pretend to clean a pore," he says. Colbert's aestheticians slough off dead skin cells with the Parisian Peel, a gentle microdermabrasion machine, and then bathe skin in energy from a non-ablative Cutera laser in order to stimulate the skin's fibroblasts, which in turn stimulate collagen and elastin production. "I compare skin to fabric. You can literally increase its thread count," he says. One last step—a slather of sugarcane exfoliant—and you're out the door looking like, well, Naomi Watts.

Many of the city's hottest facialists work in tandem with doctors, like Jordana Mattioli in the office of plastic surgeon Adam Kolker, M.D. According to Mattioli, her clients want cumulative effects, but they also expect the wow factor. "It's New York. Everyone comes in with the same requests: 'Don't mess up my makeup; don't snarl my lash extensions; watch the hair; make me look amazing. But don't make me look like I've had a facial.'" Her tricks to erase irritation and redness range from low- to high-tech: ice packs and high-frequency currents after extraction, a tiny hand-held fan to cool the face during peels, soothing serums packed with vitamins, enzyme masks that gently remove dead skin and debris, ultrasound, LED lights, and an operating room-size tank of oxygen.

Naturally, with so many of us clamoring for that instant glow, it's not easy getting face time with New York's finest. In fact, the most New York facial of all could be the one that completely eludes you. This spring, Melanie Simon, the West Coast celebrity skin guru, brings her coveted Chemistry Facial to the spa at the Surrey hotel. Take it from me, this is a next-level treatment, and having Simon perform it herself is like having the Holy Grail of facials. She'll be in town to personally administer her magic but three times a year, and there's sure to be a wait list. But never mind, because however much New Yorkers hate waiting in line, they absolutely adore what they can't have. □