

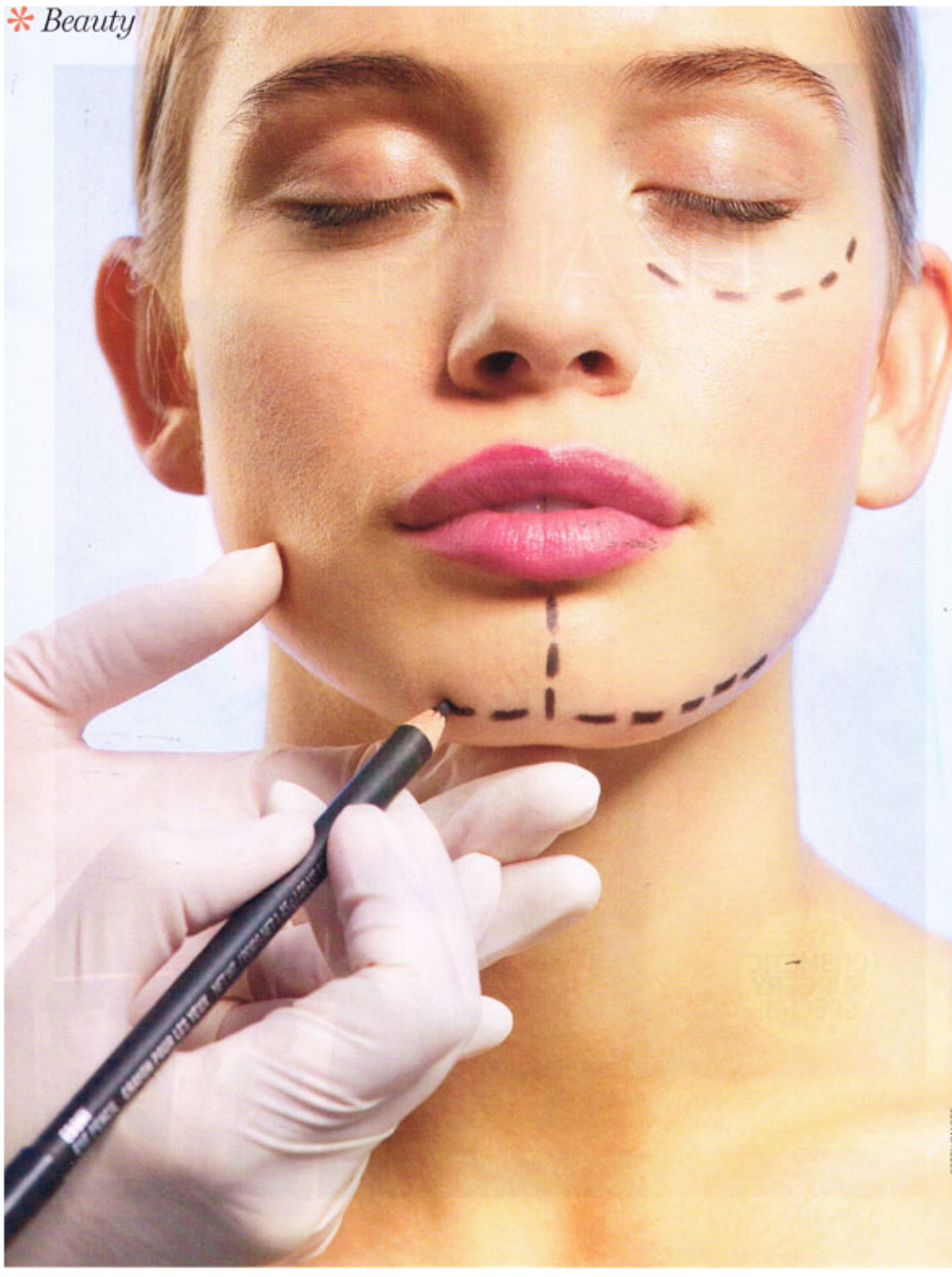
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*Beauty



THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO COSMETIC SURGERY

Modern medicine has transformed the world of beauty and taken Australia by storm.

Here, **Kelly Baker** looks at what we can't get enough of, how to find the right doctor and which treatment is right for you.

MAYBE YOU'VE thought about getting the odd non-surgical treatment – a teeny bit of something to make those fine lines disappear, a little bit of something else to plump that pout. Possibly you then wondered whether that was self-indulgent or worse, vain, but the truth is thousands of Aussies are booking in for this style of treatment every day and this trend shows absolutely no sign of abating.

Indeed, figures released by the Cosmetic Physicians Society of Australasia (CPSA) earlier this year show that we spent \$773.6 million on non-invasive and minimally invasive treatments in the past year, a 20 per cent increase on the previous year. So, are these types of treatments only for the vain? If so, a huge percentage of us fall squarely into that category.

Dermal filler injections – which are used to add volume, sculpt and reshape

the face – represent a large slice of this growth, according to the CPSA, which estimates that this type of treatment has increased by 25 per cent in the past year. Similarly, the popularity of anti-wrinkle treatments, such as Botox and Dysport, continues to grow, with an estimated 15 per cent increase in spending on these types of treatments during the past 12 months. That increase is due to a number of factors, says CPSA President Dr Gabrielle Caswell.

"The growing acceptance of cosmetic medicine in Australia may be attributed to advances in cosmetic medicine and increased patient education about treatments," says Dr Caswell. "Non-surgical treatments are becoming more effective, less invasive and involve less 'down-time' for patients. They're often less expensive than surgery, making them more accessible to patients."

According to the CPSA, the most popular non-surgical procedures requested by patients are anti-wrinkle treatments, >

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dermal fillers, microdermabrasion, laser and IPL hair removal, and skin rejuvenation treatments. Men are more likely to opt for anti-ageing, hair loss and balding treatments, and laser or IPL treatments for skin rejuvenation and hair removal.

The clientele include both men and women, and they're not waiting until they're of "a certain age" either.

At the Collagen Face Centre in Sydney's Bondi Junction, Dr Peter Bakaric treats dozens of patients daily. A large percentage of them are barely into their 20s.

"Starting earlier is a really big trend," says Dr Bakaric, who has been working in this field for 30 years. "Our biggest age category is 20 to 25 years. It's a bit disturbing ... I don't know where they get the money, although a 23-year-old girl did say to me recently that she doesn't care if she can't afford to pay her rent – she'll always be able to pay for her Botox."

The trend for women and men to begin their non-surgical treatment program at a younger age does hold some scientific weight. If filler is injected at a younger age, the gravitational effect of ageing can be slowed to some degree. The same can be said for muscle relaxants, such as Botox and Dysport.

"If you start early, those dynamic wrinkles will never become as prevalent as they might do if you started in your 30s or 40s," says Dr Bakaric.

The non-surgical and even the surgical beauty treatment world is that many women (and men) are happy to spill the beans.

"Once upon a time, everything was very hush, hush," says Dr Bakaric. "It was like a secret society, but now it's almost a badge of honour."

The Collagen Face Centre, along with many other clinics throughout Australia, is also treating women at the other end of the age spectrum, with some first-time clients in their 80s. Indeed, Dr Bakaric recently consulted with such a woman, who was having her first cosmetic treatments of any sort.

Men, too, are getting into the action, says cosmetic surgeon Dr William Mooney, who heads up Face Plus Medispa. "Some days, I walk into the waiting room and it's full of men," he says. "Attitudes are definitely changing."

A USER'S GUIDE

IN OUR up-to-the-minute guide to Australia's most popular cosmetic treatments and surgical procedures, we've looked at what treatments are available, what they're best for, how much they cost and, yes, even how they feel, including a first-person account by author Kathy Lette on having fractionated laser skin resurfacing treatment (see below), plus everything that you need to know about this effective and non-invasive treatment (see overleaf).

MUSCLE FREEZERS

Muscle freezers, such as Botox and Dysport, are injectable toxins that paralyse the muscles which lead to the formation of lines and wrinkles. They are frequently used to treat "crow's feet" (the lines at the outer corners of the eyes) frown lines (yep, that nasty one between the eyebrows), lines across the forehead and also lines from the corner of the mouth to the chin. It is also possible to use Botox as a

Goodbye, Surfer Girl HELLO, GORGEOUS

A beachside childhood left Kathy Lette with significant sun-damage, but a high-tech laser treatment is helping her turn back the clock.



Growing up as a surfer girl in Cronulla, in Sydney, "sun worship" was our only religion. So, today, I have a constellation of "flat whites" (although solar keratosis is the medical term) all over my body. I find them so disfiguring, I was tempted to get my mirrors insured.

Eager to rid myself of such crinkles and sun spots, I've spent a fortune on moisturisers. Yet the only miraculous thing about a "miracle" cream is that anyone would pay \$300 for it.

It was then I heard about fractionated laser resurfacing. I thought lasers were only in *Star Wars* films, but no, they're also the latest in anti-ageing and sun-damage treatments.



Above: Kathy Lette before and during her fractionated laser skin resurfacing treatment.

Fractionated lasers are designed to pump up your collagen, fade sun spots and tighten and brighten the skin. I made an appointment to see Dr Joseph Hkeik, of Darlinghurst, Sydney. Over tea and bonbons, he explained the procedure to me.

Basically, fractionated laser is a treatment which targets ageing and sun-damaged skin with a laser column that penetrates deep into the dermis. What's good about this specific laser is that it only treats a fraction of tissue at a time (hence the name), leaving the surrounding tissue intact. The process stimulates your body's own natural healing process, replacing the old and damaged cells