

COSMETIC ENHANCEMENTS

INFORMATION FEATURE

AGEING: KNOWING YOUR OPTIONS

This past February, push came to shove for Janet. The 50-year-old Newmarket, Ont., public servant was troubled each time she looked in a mirror. Inside, she felt vibrant, healthy, and unchanged from her 30s.

Her face, however, told a different story. There were those tell-tale signs of ageing: Deep laugh lines at the corners of her mouth, a pair of vertical furrows between her eyebrows and her cheeks no longer had the fullness of youth. She might feel great but she looked tired and a bit worn down.

Janet did something an increasing number of women — and men — are doing. She visited a dermatologist to see how to restore youthfulness to gently ageing faces. Dr. Vince Bertucci of Bertucci MedSpa in Woodbridge, Ont., north of Toronto, recommended a procedure called Soft Lift.

With Soft Lift, he would use a combination of injectable treatments: Botox Cosmetic to smooth the forehead wrinkles, crow's feet and furrows from her brow; Juvéderm dermal filler to fill out sunken cheeks and chin, diminishing fine lines and creases.

"I think it only took an hour in his office. There were no after effects. I was able to go right back to work and the results were marvellous," she says. "It was not transformational. What people noticed was that I looked fresher, almost carefree.

"It took years off my face. No more laugh lines around my mouth. No more furrows between my eyebrows. Soft Lift was terrific."

Terrific indeed, says Dr. Nowell Solish, a dermatologist with a private practice in the heart of Toronto's upscale Yorkville area. "When you combine Botox with Juvéderm as a Soft Lift, it is a case of one plus one plus one equalling three.

"Soft Lift allows cosmetic dermatologists like me to address the entire face, instead of just parts of it. The results are far more satisfying."

Perhaps best of all, Soft Lift can be done right in a cosmetic physician's office in anywhere from one to two visits, depending on the extent of the



Before and after a Soft Lift treatment, performed by Dr. Vince Bertucci.

ageing that has already taken place.

Minimally invasive cosmetic procedures such as Botox and Juvéderm have become the fastest-growing segment of the aesthetic physician's practice. In 2008, 10.1 million of the 12.1 million people seeking a facial makeover in North America opted for injectable treatments. Botox, a near-wonder product introduced 19 years ago in Canada, accounted for 4.7 million of the procedures with women.

"One of the greatest steps forward in injectable procedures is the introduction of Soft Lift," Dr. Bertucci says. "It takes two products, each of which has been proven safe and effective over years of use, and combines them to produce far superior results

than when used individually. The entire face is refreshed, becomes more vibrant and youthful."

Soft Lift directly addresses the root cause of skin ageing. Dr. Bertucci calls them the three Ds: deterioration, descent and deflation. Decades of unprotected exposure to the sun's UV rays, smoking, consumption of alcoholic beverages and simple natural processes can cause facial muscles to sag and the collagen that provides underlying support for the skin to break down.

"You see that collagen breakdown particularly in the cheeks and lips," Dr. Solish says. "They lose youthful fullness and the sagging effect creates shadows that age the face."

Botox, a purified protein originally used to address medical conditions, temporarily relaxes muscles when injected directly into them. Lines and wrinkles disappear and the effects can last up to four months.

Juvéderm is derived from hyaluronic acid, a sugar that occurs naturally in the body, which, with collagen, provides the underlying support for facial skin. Together they help retain moisture and provide fullness. Injected in the lower two-thirds of the face, Juvéderm can restore youthful fullness to lips, cheeks and chin for up to 12 months.

"The effect is natural," Dr. Bertucci says. "It is not artificial or overdone. It is still the same face but younger looking, more rested and vibrant, which is what most people want."

Moreover, Soft Lift is minimally invasive, can be done relatively quickly, is temporary and relatively affordable. Cost varies from physician to physician, depending on the extent of treatment needed.

Janet says the results have made her a Soft Lift fan. In six months to a year, depending on how long the effects last, she plans on visiting Dr. Bertucci again for a refresher.

"I look at the difference it has made in how I look and how much better I feel about myself, how much more confident I am in my appearance — it isn't a lot to pay for those wonderful benefits," she says.

Shedding light on cosmetic treatments

When it comes to how they look, Canadian women agree: Wrinkles are their top worry. In fact, according to a survey conducted by the FACE Institute, 59% of Canadian women rank wrinkles as their main skin concern.

The real problem is only 9% feel very confident about how to banish wrinkles. For lost skin volume, the figure is closer to 4%. Yet, many still invest in anti-ageing treatments they hope will make a visible difference.

"Awareness of effective treatments continues to be fairly low among both Canadian women and men," says Dr. Nowell Solish, a Toronto dermatologist. "One of our jobs as skin specialists is to explain the amazing products and procedures we now have to restore what nature has damaged.

"We have injectable treatments that are relatively simple, affordable, safe and successful."

Last year, North American cosmetic physicians performed about 12.1 million injectable procedures, up 6% from 2007.

Take Botox Cosmetic. It is a purified protein first used decades ago as a non-surgical therapy for medical conditions. While it is the same medicine used to treat patients with medical conditions, it is administered in much smaller doses for aesthetic use. With more than 2,000 articles on Botox and Botox Cosmetic in peer-reviewed publications, it is one of the most widely researched medicines in the world and has been used safely in Canada for 19 years. Nearly 17 million treatment sessions have been performed with Botox and Botox Cosmetic in the United States alone over the past 14 years.

Today, Botox is one of the fastest-growing ways to address wrinkles.

What Botox does is relax facial muscles when injected directly into them. Results are typically noticeable within three to seven days and can last up to four months, depending on the patient. Treatment can often be done in 30 minutes or less, right in an aesthetic physician's office.

Juvéderm, an injectable dermal filler, is another safe and effective product. It derives from hyaluronic acid, a sugar that occurs naturally in the body, which, with collagen, gives substance and form to the layers under the skin. Natural ageing reduces the volume of both, and skin sags. Juvéderm also contains the anesthetic lidocaine for added comfort. Injected in the lower portion of the face, Juvéderm can diminish fine lines and wrinkles, fill hollowed cheeks and add definition to sagging skin for up to one year.

While more Canadians are using injectable treatments such as Botox and Juvéderm to address their wrinkles, few are familiar with how they work.

"The best patients are informed patients," says Dr. Vince Bertucci of Bertucci MedSpa of Woodbridge, Ont. "I not only insist on taking the time to thoroughly explain what procedures are available and what each consists of, I also urge them to do their own research before sitting down with me so I can answer any questions."

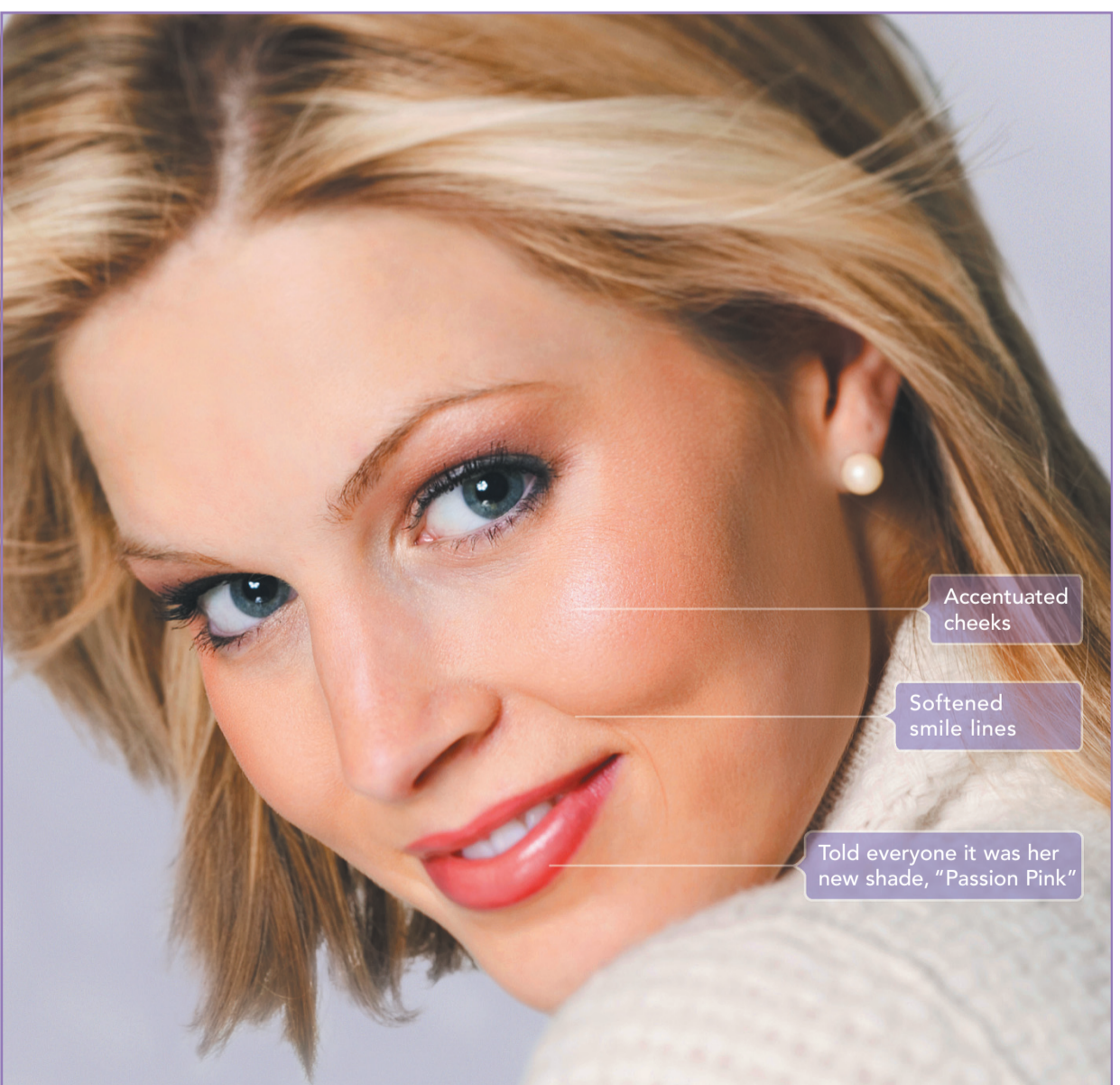
One of the Web sites he recommends is www.faceinstitute.ca. This site not only gives detailed information on popular products and procedures, and explanations for what causes the most common skin problems and their treatments, it also provides a list of physicians across Canada best qualified to administer them.

Janet, 50, had a treatment called Soft Lift at Dr. Bertucci's clinic in February. It combines Botox and Juvéderm to address the entire face rather than correcting problems piecemeal.

"I did research on my own and then when I sat down with him, Dr. Bertucci went through everything, and answered every question I had," she says.

"The Soft Lift treatment was absolutely wonderful. I now look just like I feel. I would certainly do it all over again."

To find a qualified cosmetic doctor near you, visit www.faceinstitute.ca.



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†Photos courtesy of Dr. Jessica Wu.