

FINANCIAL TIMES

# How to spend it

24-PAGE BEAUTY SPECIAL

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**THE LONDON UNDERGROUND**  
UBER-COOL MENSWEAR IN  
A MAYFAIR BANK VAULT



**A** recent study suggests that the average American born today will live to be 100 years old; while the Office for National Statistics predicts that by 2066 more than half a million people in the UK will have surpassed this age. Woody Allen once said, “You can live to be 100 if you give up all the things that make you want to live to be 100.” But if the beauty industry is to be believed, we can still look great as we enter our dotage. I have encountered many supposedly non-toxic, age-defying procedures, including lasers such as Fraxel and IPL; AHA peels that resurface the skin; the Dermapen, which uses miniature needles to reduce wrinkles; even stem cell regeneration using a tiny sample of skin taken from behind the ear. However, recently I have been hearing a lot about an old-school, *au naturel* anti-ageing method called mesotherapy.

Dr Maurice Dray was one of the first French doctors to work with mesotherapy (he began practising almost 20 years ago) and has been plying his technique to countless discerning clients in Paris, London, Madrid, Barcelona and Dallas ever since. And, despite being quite averse to having my face injected, I took the plunge last year and trialled mesotherapy as a first foray into – whisper it – injectables.

The procedure – called Mesolift – used a meso gun, which looks like a large stapler, to inject a cocktail of vitamins (A, B, C and E), amino acids, hyaluronic acid, nucleic acids and coenzymes superficially into my skin. The cocktail stimulates the cells to produce more collagen and improve elasticity. I loved the results. It gave me a dewy, glowing complexion for about a month.

After a few repeat treatments, Dr Dray recommended I try his Ten Minute Face Lift. This time he used a syringe to inject dermal filler consisting of biphasic tricalcium phosphates, or BTCs (biodegradable microparticles), and hyaluronic acid (which helps hydrate the skin and encourages collagen production). The main focus of this treatment was my lower face. I was injected along my jaw line to tighten the skin around my chin and up to my cheekbones. The results were stop-you-in-the-street good and lasted for about nine months.

Now, I’m back for a Crown Lift, the Dr Dray treatment that comes with the most glowing testimonials from the Girls Who Know circles of models, actresses and beauty editors.

#### WEEK ONE

I am in Dr Dray’s South Kensington clinic and he’s explaining, in a heavy French accent, the benefits of his treatments. “I want my clients to look the very best versions of themselves, with as little down time or discomfort as possible. My patients and I are on a lifelong journey together, so their long-term health

is of utmost importance to me. And though I use a broad range of products, I like using natural ingredients that are non-allergenic, biodegradable and totally safe.”

Dr Dray inspects my face, gently nudging and tapping different parts of it. With the canvas duly reviewed, he snaps on his white gloves and takes a syringe from Dr Benjamin, who assists in all the procedures. This time Dr Dray injects a hyaluronic acid dermal filler along the top of my hairline and into my scalp behind my ears. The needles sting a little, but the discomfort is short-lived, and within 15 minutes he is finished. After a cup of mint tea, I hightail on my Boris bike back to Knightsbridge. The results are immediate, and despite a few minor bruises I am already looking “fresher”.

#### WEEK TWO

Within days my face really “takes hold”; I have smoother skin and a deep glow, and the pull-up effect is clearly noticeable (and supposedly will peak after three weeks). My cheekbones are more pronounced, my jaw line newly tight, and my eyes have a feline quality no amount of carefully applied eyeliner can achieve. It is like an intensive facial and invisible facelift combined – subtle but very effective. However, it must be repeated every four to six months to maintain the effect.

Meantime, bikini-readiness is high on my agenda and my thoughts return to mesotherapy – but this time for tackling the cellulite on my thighs. I count down the days until I see Dr Dray again. The pursuit of youthful beauty should come with a warning – it can get very addictive.

#### WEEK THREE

The treatment for cellulite/fat reduction starts with Dr Dray gently tugging and prodding the outer and inner flabby bits of my thighs. He puts little purple marks on the target areas and uses the meso gun to inject the cocktail of vitamins, acids and coenzymes into each patch. This should break down the adipocytes (fat cells), which the body then eliminates over time. “You need about five sessions” – spread out over as many weeks – “to really see the results,” he says. “But unlike liposuction, which can scar, there are few side effects. Expect some light bruising and swelling for about seven days.”

I am told to return in a few days for a session on the electric-current massage table. This will help to stimulate the lymph system, which in turn helps to move the meso injectable around. “It is a crucial part of the treatment,” Dr Dray says. “You need to come back for your second round of this in about three to four weeks, once the bruising and swelling has totally dissipated.”

#### WEEK SIX

During the interim weeks I grow frustrated at the lack of rapid results that the same treatment had on my face. My skinny jeans are still too skinny, and the area that’s being treated has actually swollen – so is larger. With a heavy heart (I may be an old hand at this beauty game,

but I am not immune to disappointment), I find myself wondering if I would have been better off on the lean-and-mean diet and logging a few more hours at the gym.

After my second session – another round of injections followed by half an hour of jiggling on the massage machine, which like Ionithermie uses electric currents to stimulate my muscles – I share my concerns.

Dr Dray explains that in a few cases, mesotherapy alone is not enough and additional work on the area is required. “Don’t worry; all you need is a programme of deep massage – and I know just the person.”

Tetyana, who is based at Neville Hair & Beauty on Pont Street, a stone’s throw from Dr Dray’s offices – but who only works twice a week and is booked up for ages – thankfully hears my pleas and squeezes me in.

“I see this all the time. I can fix this. Mesotherapy works, and together with my reshaping massage you will have a significant shape change.” I’m immediately comforted by the beautiful Ukrainian’s confident tone.

Tetyana Niroomand-Rad is the ultimate leg-shaping masseuse. With a handy black belt in judo, she is like

*Within days I have a deep glow, and the pull-up effect is clearly noticeable.*

a one-woman army in the battle against the bulge. Many doctors in Harley Street refer their patients to her. She draws up a schedule that promises, alongside my three visits to Dr Dray and his magic meso gun, to shrink the size of my fat cells. The first massage is accompanied by dry brushing, which stimulates the lymph nodes, increases metabolic activity, revitalises and smooths the skin, and prepares the body for the cellulite slaying.

Then she commences with the actual massage. “I must warn you, it may hurt, and you are very likely to be bruised,” she says as she starts kneading my thighs like balls of dough. She’s not kidding. Let’s just say it’s no Zen-style relaxation treatment. But after an hour, both the look and the texture of my skin have improved. “It’s incredible, right? This is what many of my celebrity clients do six weeks before a shoot,” she says.

All that fancy equipment, when really what does the trick is a good pair of hands. Who would have guessed?

#### WEEK EIGHT

I’m in the twice-weekly groove, as Tetyana performs the deep-tissue massage combined with lymphatic drainage and a unique cupping technique – she rubs a little cup with force up and down the fat areas, which, according to her, lifts the connective tissue and brings hydration and blood flow to the surface. The excess fluids and toxins are drained, thanks to the opening of lymphatic pathways. The massage also promotes blood and oxygen circulation back into what Tetyana politely refers to as my “problem areas”. The overall

chronicles of a spa junkie *presents*

*the MAN WITH the*



purpose is to help contour the body and – combined with the mesotherapy – significantly reduce the appearance of cellulite. I leave feeling suitably drained and pummelled each time. It is a gift that keeps on getting better, and I love her warrior approach.

#### WEEK NINE

My last session of mesotherapy with Dr Dray, and both of us are extremely relieved that the treatment has worked, thanks to the combination of injections and Tetyana's massage skills. The swollen and lumpy bits are things of the past. And by now it's an easy routine; I'm in and out in 15 minutes.

Then I'm back at Neville, the home-away-from-home, does-it-all beauty salon for the Chelsea set, and up on the third floor, where Tetyana – or “the slayer”, as I've taken to calling her – resides. Today, in addition to the shaping massage, she adds a hot algae body wrap, which helps flush out the fatty acids and toxins that have been shifted during the massage; it tones the skin, too, and also has a relaxing effect, which is a quite heavenly change to the pummelling.

#### WEEK ELEVEN

I'm done. I've lost nearly 3cm from each thigh and as a by-product of the massage (which extended up to my waist) I have a trimmer waist and tummy, too. And I have a face that continues to subtly defy gravity, as well as a youthful glow. It's been a long and, on occasion, rocky road, but I am so happy with my mini non-surgical face- and body-lift that I've already forgotten the prickly injections, slaying and bruising I had along the way.

#### THE BOTTOM LINE:

I am now a resolute fan of Dr Dray's miracle Crown Lift; my face looks fresher and younger but totally natural, without a hint of being “done”. As for my thighs, I am pleased with the end results – but they were not achieved as quickly or as easily as I had expected. For me, mesotherapy on the body only worked in conjunction with the massage and I think, on balance, I should have put down my fork, cut down on wine and caffeine, taken a few more Pilates classes and booked a course of Tetyana's body-sculpting massage. Scientific advances may help us look younger than ever, but old-fashioned remedies can still punch above their weight. ♦

*Spa Junkie pays for all her own treatments. Dr Maurice Dray, 11B Albert Place, London W8 (020-7937 1031; [www.clinicdray.com](http://www.clinicdray.com)); the Crown Lift costs £350 per syringe (one is usually enough), and mesotherapy in the body costs £200 per treatment. Neville Hair & Beauty, 5 Pont Street, London SW1 (020-7235 3654; [www.nevillehairandbeauty.net](http://www.nevillehairandbeauty.net)); a meso massage costs £120 for 60 minutes or £180 for 90 minutes, including body peel and wrap.*



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# GOLDEN GUN

**Our undercover reporter submits her face and her thighs to the sharp-ended ministrations of Dr Dray.**