

THE FACE

Sun damage and wrinkles

The solution The new **Fraxel Re:Store Dual** is the latest laser that promises to restore leathery, weather-beaten skin to its youthful porcelain glory. It works a bit like a digital camera, spiking the face with pixellated beams of light that target flawed cells while leaving the surrounding tissues untouched. Unlike the older Fraxel, which just worked on fine lines, this new model has two separate settings – one to zap brown spots, the other to reduce lines and acne scars. There is also little danger of pigmentation, which was previously a risk on darker skin.

Pain factor Our tester felt a slight sensation of hundreds of tiny needles being rolled over her face but, thanks to the topical anaesthetic cream that's applied to the area an hour before treatment, she said it was bearable.

Downtime Clear your diary and plan to lay low for about a week. Immediately after the treatment your face swells and skin turns red, as if you have awful sunburn. The following day the swelling subsides dramatically and the redness is replaced by a scaly brown film that starts flaking off over the next week.

Who to see The laser guru Dr Nick Lowe, or one of his nurses, at the Cranley Clinic, 3 Harcourt House, 19a Cavendish Square, W1 (tel: 020 7499 3223; drnicklowe.com). Depending on the state of your skin, Dr Lowe recommends a course of up to four treatments, which cost from £875 each.

Results 9/10. Once the reptilian shedding has followed its course, pristine, baby-soft skin is revealed. Highly recommended for sloughing away sun damage or the greyness of winter complexions.

Thin lips

The solution **Restylane Lidocaine** is the newest-generation facial filler. It's perfect for plumping sensitive areas of the face such as deflated lips because it contains a mix of hyaluronic acid and lidocaine, a powerful built-in anaesthetic. It is injected in minuscule amounts through an ultra-thin needle, which allows for bull's-eye precision.

Pain factor More uncomfortable than painful – think repeated pinpricks. Although our tester said she looked like she had been in a street fight, she didn't feel the sting or pinch that these injections usually deliver.

Downtime Depending on how sensitive your skin is, the area around your mouth may look and feel like a bruised peach for three to five days after the treatment.

Who to see Dr Ross Perry at Cosmedics Skin Clinics (tel: 020 7386 0464; cosmedics.co.uk). Treatment costs from £250.

Results 10/10. Hey presto! Smiles are fuller with no fear of a trout pout. Our tester's perfect bee-stung lips should stay plumped for six to nine months.

Jowls

The solution The **10-Minute Facelift** tackles gravity's pull without the need for the knife. First is a procedure called mesotherapy, which uses a hi-tech handgun to fire hundreds of microscopic injections containing a cocktail of hyaluronic acid (to plump skin), vitamins and minerals into the face. Then comes the really clever bit: injections of biphasic tricalcium phosphates – commonly used in dental powders, antacids and calcium supplements, it also works to stimulate the production of collagen, which keeps skin taut.

Pain factor Skin is prepped with an anaesthetic cream before the doctor goes to work with the gun, which makes a sharp popping noise. It doesn't hurt – the sensation is rather like having a ballpoint pen pressed against your face repeatedly. Afterwards the doctor massages the areas treated to distribute the solutions and applies an ice pack to help prevent bruising.

Downtime Our tester reported no bruising or swelling but said her face felt tender for about two to three days after the procedure. The gun also leaves tiny red marks, but these are easily covered with make-up and fade after a couple of days.

Who to see Dr Maurice Dray at 11b Albert Place, W8 (tel: 020 7937 1031; drdray.eu). Mesotherapy sessions cost £200 each and three are recommended, one month apart. The 10-Minute Facelift costs £350 a session and two are recommended, three months apart.

Results 8/10. After only one session our tester noted a youthful, hydrated glow that made her skin look far more radiant than any expensive moisturiser ever had. After completing the course she reported a significantly tighter jawline.

Crow's feet

The solution **Xeomin** is the new Botox – it's a neurotoxin injection that temporarily paralyses facial muscles to stop fine lines and wrinkles forming. Its maker (a company called Merz) argues that it is more potent than other muscle-freezing injections because it doesn't contain complex proteins – it says some people can build up a tolerance or immunity to these, making traditional injections less effective with continual use.

Pain factor The slight sting really is a small price to pay for crinkle-free peepers.

Downtime Eyes are a tricky area to treat because the skin that surrounds them is finer than elsewhere

Xeomin magically took five years off our tester's face

on the face, and is therefore more susceptible to bruising. Plan to have this done at least a week before a big party or any event where you will be on show.

Who to see Injections around the eyes need to be super-precise as a misplaced jab can have disastrous consequences – people have been known to suffer from droopy eyelids. Make sure you see a practitioner who has plenty of experience. We recommend Dr Elisabeth Dancey at the Bijoux Medi-Spa, 149 Ebury Street, SW1 (tel: 020 7730 0765; bijoux-medispa.co.uk).

Results 9/10. This magically took five years off our tester's face – it is also good for preventing further lines from forming. Treatment costs from £200. ▷