

# What Price, Beauty?

By Cathy Tyson

With a median family income of \$134,700 in 2005 dollars for Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda, there appears to be more than a few disposable dollars available for self-improvement in the neighborhood. Getting a haircut is required maintenance, but for most people a caviar facial, or leg waxing could be considered more of an optional treatment. Although, to be fair, what woman really wants a mustache? Upper lip waxing surely falls into the category of required maintenance. For many area residents treating themselves to these non-essential services becomes part maintenance, part anti-aging and part pampering. One thing's for sure, natural beauty doesn't come cheap.

### Best foot forward

There are thirty-nine nail salons in Lamorinda, reflecting the number of regular customers, among them men, women and college students. With prices starting at \$12 for a manicure at an inexpensive shop to \$29 at a more upscale salon, having your nails done has gone from a treat to regular maintenance. Pedicures are a bit more expensive, but most salons offer a discount on clients getting both done. "My husband likes me to have my nails done," reports one patron recently at Anna's Nails in Moraga. Her friend in the next chair comments, "Summer is coming and my nails just needed it."

### Why stop there?

Kimberly Nelson, an esthetician at Shelby Sexton salon, gives usually 4 facials a day. The 80-minute Caviar Collagen Facial at \$150 is one of her most popular and most expensive treatments. She reports her clients feel like they've had a massage, and that they can escape at the salon and pamper themselves. Shirley Takeuchi, owner and esthetician of Reflexion in the Rheem Shopping center has quite a few clients in for regular waxing, but her Repechage Four-layer facial at \$100 is her most popular treatment. This is especially done before parties, because of its plumping, line diminishing properties. She also does hand and face microdermabrasion.

### Lasers, injectables and peels

For those willing to kick it up a notch, Dr. Kristin Walker in Orinda was voted best Dermatologist, by the Lamorinda Moms Club this year. Dr. Walker estimates that overall approximately half of her patients are men, but with regard to anti-aging procedures roughly 75% of clients are women between 35 and 45. Botox for forehead lines and Restylane for nasolabial folds are her most requested treatment.

"IPL - Intense Pulse Light via their state of the art Cutera machine is another very popular treatment, because it gives such good results," says Physician's Assistant Nikki Satovsky. She has between 15 and 30 clients a week for this procedure. Laser hair removal is also done in their office, as is spider vein treatment. Satovsky continues, for clients willing to go all the way, she recommends IPL for brown spots, then Botox and Restylane for fine lines and filling, then a chemical peel to polish the whole face. Prices for all treatments vary from client to client, depending on the amount filler, sunspots, etc. and are determined at consultation.

Whether its California sun damage, acne scars, or just vanity; getting a little professional help is more acceptable now than ever. Is it maintenance, or because I'm worth it? Does it really matter?



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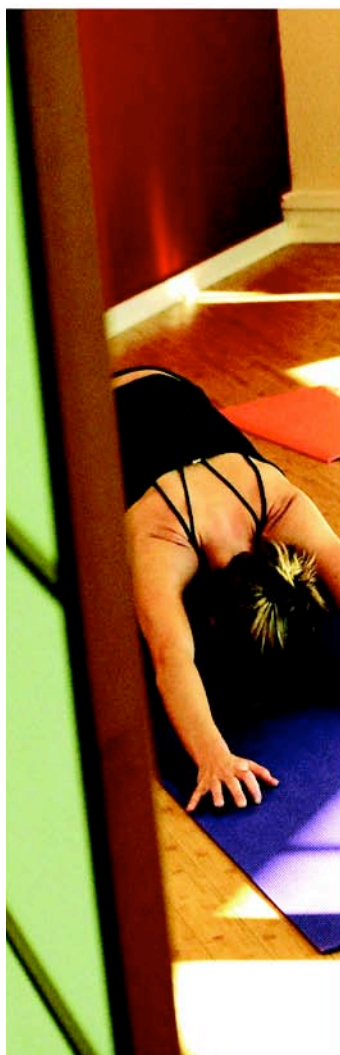
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