

COOL IDEAS FOR LOOKING YOUNGER NOW

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MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR



COOL IDEAS TO

Look Younger Now

The writer discovers the latest in bringing hands, eyes, hair and more back to a presence you can love.

By Karen T. Bartlett

So I just blew out another round of birthday candles. “Make a wish!” they said. And I said, “Oh, I have everything I want. I can’t think of a thing to wish for.”

Of course, that’s a lie. I wish to look in the mirror and see my younger, more supple self, perhaps an edgier self at that. A tranquil self who’s just emerged from Sleeping Beauty’s 100-year nap. But as a full face and body surgical makeover is out of the question, what’s a birthday girl to do?

As it turns out, there’s magic afoot in the rejuvenation business. Surgical centers are feeling more spa-ish; spas are becoming more restorative. Minimally invasive therapies yield reasonably long-lasting results with hardly any downtime (who has time for that?). Less is definitely more, and, best of all, the tab can be less than that of a weekend getaway. So, here are my three wishes and why every one of them is absolutely essential.

Wish 1: Photo-ready Hands

It’s book-signing day. I pick up my special purple pen to inscribe my super-fun family guidebook to the lively twins, Amy and Noah. As the mom positions her phone for a close-up shot, my eyes stray from the flow of purple ink to a purple vein snaking its way across the back of my hand. Horrors! What 8-year-olds want a wicked old witch scribbling in their new book? And worse, will my scary hand show up on Facebook? That’s it. For Wish No. 1, I’ll have non-scary book-signing hands, please.

I once was told that doctors don’t minimize hand veins because those veins are needed in case of an emergency, to insert an IV. “Not so,” says Naples’ renowned dual-board-certified vein specialist, Dr. Mark Marzano. “There are more than enough deep veins in the hands to maintain proper blood flow. I could take out every visible vein in your hand and not compromise [emergency access].” Which, I trust, won’t be necessary, even for my wicked-witch veins. Moreover, adds Marzano’s medical assistant, Suzanne Wiesen, the procedure—called a mini-phlebotomy—has such pleasing results that for many patients it has become just another regularly scheduled aspect of their personal maintenance regimen.

A mini-phlebotomy isn’t just a boon for book-signing authors. There’s the couple marrying for the second (or third) time, facing that ubiquitous hands-with-rings close-up. Who wants a portrait comprising silk, roses, gleaming wedding bands—and gnarly veins? And it’s not our fault! With every birthday, we lose a little more elasticity, subcutaneous fat and collagen, and the hands are the meanest age-tattletales of our body. To those who contend that women are vain in this regard, Wiesen has proof that men are exactly the same, especially those who work out to stay fit. It’s a cruel joke that working with weights and doing strength training actually accelerate bulging veins. And who knew that heat and sun exposure on the tennis court make veins swell?

Who wants a [wedding] portrait comprising silk, roses, gleaming wedding bands—and gnarly veins?

For any lingering concerns about dissolving a vein, faulty though it may be, Marzano says, “the body loves to grow blood vessels. When we remove a damaged vein, it simply reroutes the flow of blood to a healthy (not bulging) one, or creates a fresh new one.” The procedure (ranging from \$350 to \$2,000) takes 15 to 45 minutes, from the numbing lidocaine to the injection of the vein-dissolving fluid, Asclera, and then two to five days of compression as the veins slowly collapse and disappear (note to self: Pick up a chic little golf glove). I can bring along my favorite pillow or blanket for comfort if I like. One patient brings her lavender-infused eye pillow. Another—a professional athlete, Wiesen says with a smile—brings his little dog to calm his jittery nerves. I’m not scared, but my sock monkey plans to come with me anyway.

Vein Care Specialists, 1350 Tamiami Trail, Suite 204, Naples; 430-8346; theveinpro.com

Sun Spots, Begone!

Remember those oh-so-cute sun-kissed freckles sprinkled daintily over the bridge of your nose? Everyone said they were adorable. But sometime when you weren’t paying attention, at least for me, “sun-kissed” became “sun-damaged.” And little brown spots we’ll go ahead and call freckles are also appearing on my arms. And, more to the point here, my hands. Not adorable at all.

Luckily, medical aesthetician Lisa Hart, CLT, CME, recently opened the 5th Ave Med Spa in Old Naples, and one of her specialties is making freckles-turned-spots disappear. She uses BBL broadband, a pulsed light treatment that works like magic on brown spots caused by sun damage. Gnarly veins out of the picture (literally), I’m ready for the next step. With eyes protected by goggles from the bursts of super-bright light, she explains, you feel a series of stingy zaps that heat up the outer layers of skin. In magic-wand fashion, it attacks only the brown spots. You don’t look any different right afterward, but in a couple of days those spots get really dark and you might be thinking, “What have I done?” Never fear; before the week is out, they just fall off like so many cookie crumbs. If you start feeling nostalgic about those banished brown spots, don’t worry, as new ones will appear naturally with sun exposure over time. Hart says most of her clients come back once a year for maintenance. An extra bonus is that the heat stimulates cells to generate collagen, which is the one of the body’s own plumping agents.

Hart has been working in tandem with plastic surgeons for many years, and she also offers medical-grade skin peels, microneedling and other services. Her partner in 5th Ave Med Spa, Kamii Tursi, MSN, FNP, offers nonsurgical lifts, fillers, medical weight loss and other services. *5th Ave Med Spa, 300 Fifth Ave. S., Suite 209, Naples; 214-6376; 5thavemedspa.com*

And Now, for the Final Plump

Three months after Marzano’s treatment, I’m ready for Dr. Cynthia Strohmeyer, board-certified dermatologist and dermatologic surgeon, beloved around town for keeping beautiful people beautiful. Using the filler Radiesse or Restylane Lyft (\$850 or \$1,000, respectively, for both hands), we’re talking the same instant gratification that one gets from a facial filler. Done, and ready for my next book signing!

Meanwhile, I’ve got the scoop on what’s next: growth factors from donated placentas.

The placenta from health-screened donors is sent directly from the hospital to a lab, where concentrated growth factors contained in the center of the amniotic membrane is blended with Strohmeyer’s patient’s own blood to create an individualized serum. Enhancing the filler with the patient’s own growth factors helps stimulate the growth of healthy new cells. Right now it’s being used in the usual filler places, but there’s more in the works. Strohmeyer is already testing her own label of injectables to stop the progression of male pattern baldness. Just in the beginning stages, the treatments have shown some encouraging success so far. The cost starts at about \$2,500 for three sessions. Sorry, guys, it won’t work if you’re already rocking the totally bald thing.

Dermatology Specialists of Naples, 702 Goodlette-Frank Road, Suite 200, Naples; 261-2255, cstrohmeyer.com

Latest and Greatest: Veinwave Technology

The most exciting new treatment for spider veins, exclusive in this region with Dr. Mark Marzano, leaves no scars or bruises. There’s no downtime and you don’t have to avoid the sun. It works like an eraser, using thermal energy to eliminate fine thread veins on the face or body. The 15-minute-or-so procedure has been in

practice for nearly a decade by more than 1,000 European physicians, yet it was only recently cleared by the FDA for U.S. use.

“The FDA doesn’t accept results from other countries, and it’s so frustrating,” Marzano says. “Why are the veins of 30,000 Germans so different from American veins? They’re not!”



Wish 2: Ditch the Eyeliner; Recover the Flutter

It's a well-known and disturbing fact that with every birthday, your eyes disappear a little more from your face. As for me, when did my lush, nature-given lashes and decently shapely brows get so wimpy? I never was very skilled at eye makeup, even the best products can get smudgy, and removing it takes a toll on the skin. Besides, you have to start all over every morning. So, for Wish No. 2, I'd like subtle eye makeup that won't leave me looking like a raccoon after an overseas flight, and lashes I don't have to brush or glue on. My go-to expert for the first part is micropigmentation specialist Jody Dischler.

Although her two decades of working with leading plastic surgeons to apply medical aesthetics after mastectomies and other reconstructive surgery makes her more than an artist, her primary practice is combatting the disappearing act of brows, eyes and lips that results from too many birthdays.

While microblading has emerged as the trendy procedure du jour for brows, Dischler isn't a fan. She uses a medical-grade tattoo machine with a fine-needle digital pen that inserts the pigment deeper than with microblading.

Besides the natural hair-by-hair brush stroke artistry she applies in a realistic combination of lighter and darker shades, the results last from one to 10 years.

"Microblading is said to last one to three years," she says, "but because the color is right at the surface, it often lasts less than one year."

Here's my takeaway: When the permanent cosmetic (digital tattoo) is clinically, professionally and artistically applied, it's a better choice for me than microblading. Here's what happens:

"You arrive wearing the makeup you use to enhance your brows," Dischler says. "We discuss my ideas to follow your natural browline and enhance your bone structure. When your desired shape and shade are perfected, I use it as my stencil, and then follow it with the permanent cosmetic pigment."

The procedure takes two sessions. In the first, Dischler applies natural-looking hair strokes in two light densities. In about four weeks, you return and she applies two slightly darker densities. This creates a softer, more natural dimension than a single layer of lines. The cost is \$400 per session for two sessions. Dischler recommends a touchup every two years. Total investment: about the same as a monthly mani-pedi.

Permanent Cosmetics by Jody Dischler, 5100 Tamiami Trail N., Suite 304, Naples; 261-7817; permanentcosmeticsby-jody.com

Eyes on Me

So now I'm ready to recover the flutter. Mascara with fibers doesn't work for me, and my attempts at glue-on lashes are scary (see: Wicked Witch). So it's back to my favorite lash enhancer, Saadia Persad, owner of Blush Aesthetics Studio and locally the most famous go-to person for brow-threading (which one still needs after permanent cosmetic enhancement) and lash tinting. Saadia is part artist, part personal therapist and 100 percent diva. Her sexy, silvery salon enhanced with tiny jeweled dragonflies and fairy lights make me feel oh-so girly. Lash tinting, the next best thing to extensions, is less than \$30.

Inside secret: If I beg piteously, and she has the time, she may agree to add a properly lush fringe of extensions, attached to my own lashes one single, microscopic hair at a time. The process takes about 2 hours. Availability depends on how piteously you beg.

Blush Aesthetics Studio, 4089 Tamiami Trail N., Naples, Suite A103; 384-9130; blushby41.com

Wish 3: My Avatar, My Self

In the 2017 remake of the movie *Jumanji*, a bookish teenager named Martha who's shy with boys and hates P.E. gets swooshed inside an old video game with some friends, and is instantly transformed into an avatar of herself. The fearless, red-maned athlete named Ruby Roundhouse braves a teeming viper pit among other feats, and slays bad guys with martial arts-style dance combat. If it would be awesome to have an avatar, how much cooler would it be to be one? My friend Lyn Hunter, the mother of four preschoolers and an educator with a Ph.D. after her name and a love of anime (vibrant animated video characters), looked into her mirror one day a couple of years ago and decided she was not having enough fun with herself. She decided to become her own avatar.

So, this nice lady who works in a children's library had a conversation with her hair stylist, Mary Ellen Barcia. The picture she brought along showed a young woman with electric blue streaks in her dark hair. What evolved, over a year's time, wasn't just a few streaks but a stunning, full crown of anime-blue hair. The actual product is a vegan hair color called Pulp Riot. The kids went wild for it. Admiring women still stop her in public places to ask how she was "allowed" to do such a thing.

"I just smile and say, 'I'm 41 years old, and I'm the boss of my own hair!'"

"Besides," Dr. Hunter adds, "I'm working on becoming a youth services librarian. Since tweens and teens are big consumers of anime, I'm calling it professional development. Most important, every time I pass a mirror, I smile. Every single time."

I'm the boss of my own hair, and I work with kids, too. Will I have the courage to go for some professional development?

Llenocos Hair Studio, 998 Fourth Ave. S., Naples; 649-7116; llenocos.com

Wish 4: Indulgent Self-Care

Yes, I can still count to three, but it's my birthday, and I can make as many wishes as I want. The Naples Grande Beach Resort has been up to something new and intriguing in their spa, and I can't think of a better way to spend my actual day than with a little professional "research."

I've been following the latest and greatest spa treatments around the globe for the last 15 years. The more photo-perfect and more local vernacular (think all-over tribal paint in the jungle of Belize, an ice room in Scandinavia, a wine bath in Paris), the more spa-goers—including me—loved it. Actually, we still do. At a Dubai resort, for example, you can get a Cleopatra-style, 2-karat gold facial mask. But in this new, millennial-focused world, the bar is being raised from pure self-indulgence to indulgent self-care.

So, under the direction of new Director of Spa & Fitness Yenier Marrero, the Naples Grande is revamping its program to incorporate a range of life-changing modalities, including private yoga sessions, organic products and holistic therapies like Ayurveda, which originated in India more than 5,000 years ago. The term itself—ayur (life) + vedic (knowledge)—gives a clue to where this is going.

Each month, Marrero says, a new set of specials will be offered at significant discounts off the usual menu price, with additional options like the blissful, calming Shirodhara scalp treatment, a meditative oil therapy that was used in ancient India to engage the third eye and induce an expanded state of awareness. Another special might be the Swe-Thai massage, a unique marriage of ancient Eastern knowledge and Western soft-tissue therapies.

The oh-so gentle Blue Lavender & Chamomile Salt Scrub special during my birthday month packs a powerful combination of antioxidants and trace minerals to enhance circulation and reduce inflammation, and sloughs off dead skin that blocks my pores to improve skin texture. Afterward, my therapist, Stephanie, leaves me to my warm rain shower to rinse away those nasty toxins brought to the surface. After a feather-light finish of lavender oil, I'm so totally ready for Daniel, my next therapist. I've chosen a nurturing Swedish massage with a generous helping of deep-tissue massage to address annoying back issues. But before Daniel releases me, feeling limber as a noodle, out to the Palm Terrace (a secluded flower-drenched enclave off the resort's main pool with hot tub, cabanas and butler service), the Ayurvedic-trained therapist teaches me a few yoga stretches that will help with the back issues after the effects of the massage wear off.

The Spa at Naples Grande, 475 Seagate Drive, Naples; 594-6321; naplesgrande.com/spa

So, Birthday Fairy, if you're reading this, that's it. Just four small wishes, all strictly therapeutic. Thank you.✦

"We don't do \$10 brows; we fix \$10 brows." —SAADIA PERSAD

