

BYE-BYE, DOCTOR'S OFFICE? MED-SPA MANIA HITS L.A.

Faster, often cheaper and more user-friendly, chic storefronts that can drop a decade off your face in between meetings proliferate as dermatological advances make anti-aging an almost drive-through activity **By Merle Ginsberg**



In California, med-spas are required to have qualified physicians as owners; if said owner isn't a doctor, he or she needs one as a partner. "Some spas are not run the right way," says plastic surgeon **David Hopp**, who opened Robertson Blvd MedSpa five years ago and trains other doctors and nurses on injecting fillers. Contends Beverly Hills dermatologist **Peter Kopelson**: "One centimeter off, and Botox can cause drooping. Fillers can be injected too close to the surface and cause bumps. A lot of my filler practice tends to be correcting mistakes." Sherrill, however, rebuffs the idea of a degree prerequisite. "I'd never go to a surgeon for injections," she says. "I'd go to somebody who is doing it all day, every day."

But med-spas are now so prevalent, they're developing spinoffs. Skin Laundry on Montana, owned by **Yen Reis**, has five other SoCal locations (plus six others in New York, Hong Kong, et al.) but offers only one treatment: a laser facial that vaporizes dirt, tightens and tones. And Beverly Hills' peel princess **Tricia Dikes** — a famed chemical peel with her own blend of acids is the quick trick behind many celebrities' clear complexions — will open the first branch of The Face Bar on Beverly Boulevard later in November where, for \$69, newbies can get what stars have paid hundreds for. Yep, that's right: The future is looking clearer, tighter and cheaper — faster. **THR**

MOVE OVER, JUICE; there's a new liquid lunch in town. Now, faster than you can say "filler up!" myriad women — and men — are popping in and out of L.A.'s cluttered landscape of medical spas. These spas plump up wrinkles, hollows, lines, whatever appears to be sinking, so you can leave close-up-ready and head back to the office. More filling than a sandwich!

So why the med-spa proliferation now? Less downtime, less waiting and lower prices for a start: Injectables range from \$150 to \$600 a visit, as opposed to \$600 to \$1,200 at a plastic surgeon's (blanket per-syringe fees no longer apply as combo fillers grow in popularity). **Ronda Nofal**, owner of the state-of-the-art Blue Med Spa in Sherman Oaks, is seeing her business go gangbusters: "These days, people are willing to forgo laser surgery and live with hairy legs, but they won't live with wrinkles or fat!"

She's not kidding around. "When I opened Epione in 1998, the No. 1 procedure was laser hair removal," says plastic surgeon **Simon Ourian** of

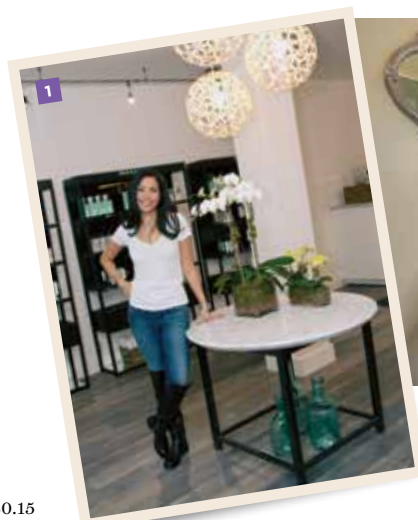
his Beverly Hills clinic, which offers hundreds of treatments in addition to fillers: bluelight therapy, lipofreeze, fat transfer — all of which tighten the skin. "Now the two most requested are Coolaser, for sun damage and facial skin laxity, and dermal fillers for an instant cheek lift and face-lift."

Nurse **Jamie Sherrill** of the thriving Beauty Park on Montana Avenue, a must-visit favorite for many celebrity and industry clients, is a 20-year med-spa veteran and the queen of combo services — a little Juvaderm, a little laser, a little Belofil. "Return patients don't even ask what I've done. They just know they like the

way they look," she says. A beautiful, ageless blonde with smooth skin, "Nurse Jamie" knows more about filler aesthetics than most. "It's about knowing *where* to put the filler. I like to inject near the temples and back of the cheeks. What you want is volume, not puffing up one area." As for her constantly growing list of clientele, she attributes the influx to what she calls "the Kardashian syndrome" — and HD television. More men also are becoming loyal customers. "They might leave their wives or lovers, but they won't leave a practitioner they trust," says Sherrill.



Sherrill



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1 Reis at her Montana Avenue Skin Laundry, one of 12 locations.
2 Nurse Jamie's treatment room at Beauty Park on Montana.
3 Robertson Blvd MedSpa in Los Angeles is owned by plastic surgeon David Hopp.