

# Beauty of the Ages

*Face to Face with the Med Spa Evolution*

BY KENDRA GILBERT

**E**lizabeth Taylor’s beauty is said to be classic. Timeless, even. The women she portrayed on film were themselves icons of beauty.

Like Cleopatra before her, and the beauties who came after, the means by which beauty is maintained and retained have taken many forms over the years. In today’s busy world, where the work week extends well beyond 40 hours, it has become harder to find time for beautification in between all those power lunches, board meetings and children’s dance recitals.

That was before the med spa.

It wasn’t until a few years ago that the med spa trend really began to catch on. Since that time, they have become tranquil bastions of health and beauty offering a retreat from the fast pace of everyday life for busy women –and men– everywhere. Like the sands of time, and those used by ancient Egyptians to slough off dead skin, the beauty business is entering and new phase and med spas are its latest evolution.

The key to the recent success of the med spa



lies in its multifaceted approach to beauty: cosmetic procedures coupled with calming spa treatments. Not to mention less downtime than more invasive plastic surgeries — think tummy tucks and nose jobs — that require weeks of recuperation.

From Botox to laser hair removal, med spas offer a variety of cosmetic procedures, performed at the hands of well trained doctors and medical professionals. All that minus the harsh lights and cold sterile rooms of more conventional surgery centers. The wallet also gets a break, as most procedures performed at med spas cost significantly less than their slice-and-dice predecessors.

With a more comprehensive approach to beauty that emphasizes total health and well being, med spas are a welcomed change from the plastic surgery boom of the ‘90s. The process continues outside of the spa as well, with a variety of medical grade beauty products offered to help keep up the new look.

It may not be the face of beauty that’s changing, but the regimen behind that beauty. Even Elizabeth Taylor had to adjust her daily routine to keep her features flawless. And while the med spa industry continues to enjoy a healthy growth spurt, it’s likely the next evolution of beauty is just around the corner. **WL**

## BEAUTY THROUGH THE AGES – A TIMELINE

### 600 B.C.

The writing’s on the wall. Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs depict primitive rhinoplasty. The Egyptians were also known to exfoliate their skin using handfuls of sand.



### 2nd Century

Renowned Greek physician Galen develops the first cold cream, a mixture of beeswax, olive oil, and rose water.



### 18th Century

Elizabethan beauty meant powdered pale skin and no freckles, which were said to be remedied using elder leaves, birch sap and sulphur. Years later Oliver Wendell Holmes would write, “This little speck, the British Isles? ‘Tis but a freckle, never mind it.”

### 19th Century

Bathing in England becomes popular following the lead of George IV, although Cleopatra and Elizabeth I previously praised the benefits of milk baths.



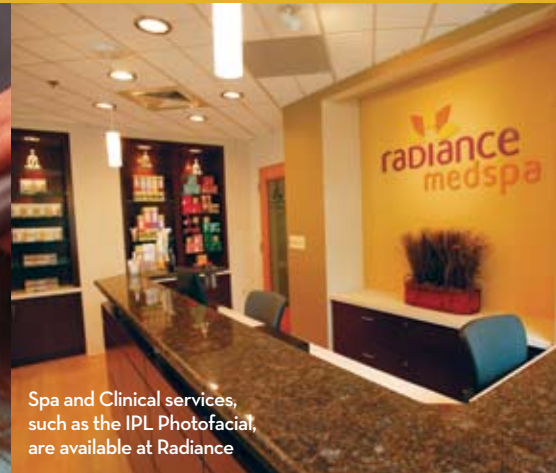
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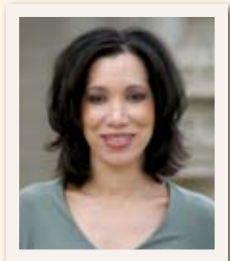
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#### 1962

The first silicone breast implants are introduced.



#### 21st Century

Reality TV shows featuring cosmetic surgery become fashionable. Fictional dramas also jump on the makeover bandwagon.



#### 2003

The med spa trend first gains popularity.

#### 2006

A new

biography of Elizabeth Taylor reveals the actress had a nose job in her 20s at the urging of studio execs at MGM. Other famous faces rumored to have been nipped and tucked by the same doctor: Natalie Wood and Marilyn Monroe.

