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GET JADE Can the relaxing jade-roller facial at Ling keep a double chin at bay?

sessions are required for optimal results, I already see a difference: My pores are smaller, crow's feet softer and my skin is more aglow. —*Elizabeth Barr*

JAVA MEDI SPA, 60 E 56th St between Madison and Park Aves, second floor (212-421-9501). Subway: N, R, W to Fifth Ave-59th St, \$650

SUNDARI FACIAL AT AJUNE

"Dry, oily or combination?" always had such a pedestrian ring to it. But in Ayurvedic terms, the question sounds poetic: "Vata, kapha or pitta?" my aesthetician, Cara Decenso, asks when I arrive. The answer is key: The Sundari facial is carefully customized to fit each client's dosha, as the three skin types are called in Ayurvedic medicine, a 5,000-year-old Indian holistic science. According to the philosophy, a person's skin (and body, and disposition) must be classified before an appropriate treatment regimen can be determined. Decenso and I decide that I'm a vata, and particularly sensitive in my T-zone, so she uses soothing products, like an essential oil that contains rose and geranium. A steam infused with fragrant rose and lemon hydrates me before a swift, pinchy extraction. And the cooling rose, lavender, chamomile and calendula mask that follows feels lusciously soft, like frosting, leaving me so delighted with my dewiness that I buy a few products on the way out. —*Zoe Wildt*
1294 Third Ave between 74th and 75th Sts (212-628-0044). Subway: 6 to 77th St, \$150

ALGAE FACIAL AT SUSAN CIMINELLI

It feels strange to pass through the tony, staid floors of Bergdorf Goodman, only to be met in the penthouse by the bubbly, New Agey Susan Ciminelli. But here I am, allowing her to slather my face alternately with fishy-smelling algae extracts, refreshing seawater and rosemary-peppermint toner. The algae extracts are meant to draw out impurities that lurk in my pores—and the stinky seaweed is definitely doing something: My skin burns and tingles,

price. Whereas the EpiFacial uses an Intense Pulsed Light laser at a variety of wavelengths, each designed to treat specific skin issues (sun spots, broken capillaries), the Epi Polish uses the IPL on a single setting for overall cell regeneration or, if you prefer, a specific setting to target one issue. And it takes only 15 minutes. I go for an all-over rejuvenation. Lillya, my technician, slathers a cold gel on my skin, then methodically moves the laser over my face, giving me short zaps along the way. I feel a vague pinprick sensation, but it's not painful. "I can see improvement already," she says as she finishes the treatment. Lillya hands me a mirror and I have to agree: My skin already looks more even in tone, my pores finer and my face has a slight glow. After Lillya applies sunscreen, I head back to work without a trace of foundation. I don't need it. —*EB*

Completely Bare, 764 Madison Ave between 65th and 66th Sts (212-717-9300). Subway: 6 to 68th St-Hunter College, \$175

CHILL BUSTER FACIAL AT OSCAR BOND

My radiator is out to get me. Luckily, there's this indulgent, one-hour facial for parched skin—a poke-free, pure pampering session for your dry, winter-charred face. Using Aveda products, aesthetician Corrie Richman washes, tones and exfoliates my skin before the pièce de résistance: a type mask sculpted from paraffin. It makes me feel a bit claustrophobic, but Richman soothes me with avocado oil and resting my mask on my face, Richman gently works out my anxiety with a head, neck and arm massage. By evening, I can't stop touching my smooth, supple cheeks. I remain itch-free for the next day or so, but to my disappointment, I find a fine layer of white, flaky skin has returned to my face by morning (Richman recommends coming monthly for lasting results). Damn you, radiator! —*Billie Cohen*
42 Wooster St between Broome and Grand Sts (212-334-3777). Subway: A, C, E to Canal St, \$85

and I have a blotchy, sensitive face for the next couple of days (which may also have been the result of Ciminelli's slightly painful extractions). As she works on me, she tries to get to the root of my skin's acne flare-ups with holistic suggestions: "You should eat beets and lentils, and take dandelion tincture and chelated zinc." At the end, Ciminelli places crystals on my chakras—something the spa owner likes to do when administering treatments. If only a visit to the dermatologist could be this much of an adventure. —*BC*
beside Bergdorf Goodman, 754 Fifth Ave between 57th and 58th Sts, penthouse floor (212-872-2650). Subway: N, R, W to Fifth Ave-59th St, \$135

EPI-POLISH FACIAL AT COMPLETELY BARE

The Epi-Polish, an abbreviated version of the salon's EpiFacial,

FACIAL SLURS

Dermatologists take some fancy new facial tricks to task

Careting-for-honey masks that moisturize skin and laser treatments that erase wrinkles: Two sure sound good. But do these facials actually work? We asked a dermatologist to weigh in on some of the latest trends. "There's always been a lot of buzz," says fifth-floor Dr. Ron Shelton, a dermatologist at Dr. Ron Shelton's New York office of dermatology. "They sound great, smell great and make you feel really good. As far as doing something for your skin? I don't know."

While some fancy-sounding ingredients can really help—honey and sugar draw out the skin's natural moisture, for example—edibles like ginger or papaya, both said to exfoliate and soften, can be itchy. "Citrus can be beneficial, but you don't know how they might react with an individual's skin," Gonzalez-Cotto says. She's not sure that other gimmicky treatments—like oxygen facials, which supposedly restore a healthy level of the stuff we breathe to the skin—do anything at all. "It's true that just walking outside depletes your skin's oxygen," she says. "But as far as helping that by oxygen being blown on the skin? No. Although it probably feels really good."

How about the low-level electrical currents used to perform "noninvasive face-lifts"? "That I've never heard of," says a skeptical Dr. Robert Anolikoff, New York University Hospital's chief of dermatology and laser treatment. Dr. Ariel Kauer of the Laser and Skin Surgery Center of New York also casts doubt: "No scientific studies show that electricity can help tighten the skin."

Jade, which is sometimes used as an "energy redecorator," is said to prevent double chins. But Dr. Anolikoff is dubious. "It's either that or magic crystals," she says sarcastically, though she adds that if a treatment "feels good and does no harm," then there's no cause for concern.

What worries her most: A spa technician who performs risky treatments that are meant to be done by trained physicians. "Heels, microdermabrasion and lasers are fine," she says. "Laser treatments, collagen and Botox injections—that's where the problems come in." Although it's not illegal for people other than physicians to operate lasers, Anolikoff says it could be risky business. "Lasers can be extremely dangerous machines," Dr. Kauer adds. "They can cause scarring, alter skin color, or even interact with certain medications."

Dr. Ron Shelton, a dermatologist who shares his office with an aesthetician, agrees, adding that microdermabrasion, which does a good job of smoothing skin, "is here to stay." He warns only against having aggressive facials too often, as that "can cause scarring or leave the skin symptomatic," turning your protective epidermis into a thin, decaying shell.

Dr. Kauer does believe that a procol facial can be a worthwhile treatment. "Antioxidants can help boost your ability to fight free radicals," she says, confirming their reputation. "There's nothing wrong with that general concept. But patients should know that going one time won't prevent sun damage." —*Beth Greenfield*