



Staten Island Advance

Reinvent yourself

You can improve your looks without a nip or a tuck or liposuction

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STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE -- Every year it's the same tired list of New Year's resolutions. Lose a pound a week. Exercise daily. Floss diligently. Yada yada yada.

All noble goals and yet, the very fact that they reappear annually makes your intentions suspect.

This year, resolve instead to reinvent yourself. There are plenty of trained professionals right here on Staten Island who are more than willing to help.

Here's a menu of ways to augment your looks without counting a single calorie.

EYEBROWS:

For every woman who struggles with a unibrow, there's another fretting that her eyebrows are too thin, too light, too just-not-there. And for that, there's tattoos.

Stella Pineda of Silver Lake has big, beautiful eyes but her eyebrows, she felt, worked against her. She booked an appointment at Raw Beauty in New Dorp to remedy the problem.

Under the steady hand of Diana Assli, owner of the salon, Ms. Pineda braved the tattoo needle for the second time. (She had the procedure done eight years ago at a different location and "it hurt then.")

Ms. Assli numbed the brow line with a topical anesthetic and spent close to an hour mixing colors to get just the right tone for Ms. Pineda's coloring.

"This will last three to seven years," Ms. Assli said as the needle that would drone on for about an hour began to buzz.

After the initial application, Ms. Pineda would return in 28 days for the final touches.

"It's wonderful," Ms. Pineda said of her finished look. "I am very happy."

Other things you can have done at Raw Beauty: Eyelash extensions, ear piercing, faux beauty marks, teeth whitening, plus all the regulars - cut, color, blowdry, etc. A manicure and pedicure for just \$21. Also, clients can browse a selection of unique products, including a line of pumpkin-scented hair products that are especially good for ridding the hair of the smell of cigarette smoke.

Raw Beauty is at 349 New Dorp Lane. Call 718-987-0333.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Now it can be said: Ammonia hurts.

But the good news is, you can have gorgeous highlights without condemning your hair to brittleness and frizz.

At Creative Gruppo in Dongan Hills, stylists have noted that this year people haven't started going darker for the winter yet. Maybe it's climate change or a later start for Daylight Savings, but whatever the reason, what clients are doing -- following a celebrity trend -- is going for darker roots coupled with highlights that lift the hair.

And with the new highlighting techniques, hair actually leaves the salon with a healthier prognosis than when it came in.

"Non-ammonia highlights are the biggest breakthrough in our business," said Creativo's Marcelle Nukho. The new beeswax-based process is safe enough even for pregnant women.

Be forewarned: The process takes a little longer than standard highlights as the solution first works to envelop the lipids surrounding the cuticle, according to Igor Zekhtser, owner of the salon.

But even if you don't understand the chemistry, you'll like the guarantee. "It's our promise to our clients," he said, "that in six months they will see that their hair is healthier."

Satisfied customer Jackie Schuster of Westerleigh had this to say about her long blonde tresses: "I'm not as frizzy. I'm shinier."

And it's not just blonde highlights. Paula Cirami of Annadale was a brunette a few weeks ago and now her hair is a deep mahogany red with warm highlights.

Other things to do at Creative Gruppo: Choose from a fall/winter hair color collection that includes wild cherry, pecan and siena. Find a hairstyle for long hair that combines textured layers with a sexy fringe. Tame frizz with a Brazilian Keratin Straightening Treatment. Shop L'Oreal products that promise prescriptive styling.

Creativo Gruppo is at 1463 Hylan Blvd. Call 718-351-2695 or visit the Web site at www.gruppocreativo.com.

DAZZLING SMILES

Walking into Dental Spa and Beyond won't in any way remind you of going to the dentist. New Age music plays at a soothing level. A pitcher of lemon water and a selection of mini-muffins greet clients in the beautifully appointed waiting room.

In the treatment room, the "chair" is covered in the softest black leather, and the indirect lighting in the room is augmented by candlelight. Clients even can choose a movie to watch in the Eltingville office's latest high-tech gadget: 3-D movie goggles.

"We're very technology-oriented," said Dr. Anne Gershowitz, who opened the practice that specializes in cosmetic and restorative dentistry eight months ago.

Another high-tech program lets patients see how they can look after a suggested treatment. Photos are taken of their existing teeth, then, through the use of a digital-imaging program, the smile they could have is inserted.

"Patients can visually see what their smile will look like," the doctor said. "We help them to imagine things."

Treatments include porcelain veneers, lumineers, implants, full-mouth reconstruction and teeth whitening.

In many cases, treatment will include more than one procedure, and since insurance is balky, patients can work out financing.

Dental Spa and Beyond is at 3777 Richmond Ave. Call 718-948-3777 or visit www.dentalspabeyond.com.

SMOOTHING WRINKLES:

In every life, some skin must sag. But the best part about living in the 21st century is that there are so many options for boosting, tightening and filling in wrinkles without having to cut into your face.

Botox is so popular, it's almost old news, but the use of the injectable treatment with the scary pedigree continues to soar. Cosmetically, it is most often used to relax the wrinkles of the forehead and between the eyes -- the infamous "11s." But it's also used to treat excessive sweating, smooth out crows' feet and relieve migraines. New applications are reported frequently.

The injectable filler market is also booming. The old standard, Restylane, has been joined by Juvederm, Perlane and Eleveess. All use hyaluronic acid, a naturally occurring sugar whose production in the body slows down with aging. The acid absorbs water, which keeps skin looking plump and wrinkle-free. Eleveess, the most recently approved by the FDA, includes a built-in anesthetic, lidocaine.

The most important thing to do when considering a needle to the face is to find an injector with expertise and a proven record of success, usually a dermatologist or plastic surgeon. The Web sites for most products include a physician referral link (go to www.botoxcosmeticusa.com, www.restylaneusa.com, www.juvedermusa.com and www.perlaneusa.com).

And here's something quirky to consider as the holiday-shopping season kicks in to high gear: According to Allergan, maker of Botox and Juvederm, many dermatologists and plastic surgeons have begun offering gift cards for a wide range of treatments. Certainly salons do the same.

Finally, something for the person who has everything?

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