



The Ageless Millionaire

The E-Zine of the Longevity Club

All the Beauty Money Can Buy

By Adriane Berg

The dollar has just lost some value against the Euro, and this makes my friend Sandra unhappy. No, she's not a currency trader; she's a magazine editor going to Hungary to get laser resurfacing. She figured she's save a ton of money that way, but now, maybe not so much. Sandra is one of the many women (and men) opting for "plastic safaris," typically to Eastern Europe, Mexico and Thailand, in order to stretch their beauty dollar. I did it myself a few years ago when I opted to get my teeth whitened in Baltimore instead of New York. Less dramatic than getting cut in Calcutta, perhaps, but the same idea.

Before Sandra left, I had to ask, "How much are you saving?" To my surprise, Sandra had no idea. She assumed that the prices here were astronomical compared to the prices there, so she surfed the web and decided to go.

While Sandra left in great spirits, I began to worry. A few weeks before, msn.com's home page reported some horrific stories about going abroad to get beautified. One woman died after returning home because of over surgery, multiple procedures squeezed into one short visit with little down time. Although, there are probably happy stories, too, what bothered me most was that Sandra had made an important decision based on

money with no actual facts.

In the anti aging world in which we live, looking good is a top priority for many. And a growing percentage of baby boomers equate looking good with managing wrinkles, cellulite, and sagging skin with modern fillers, peels, dermabrasions and cosmueceticals. I have had numerous retirement planning consultations with clients who want to include anti aging treatments as a regular yearly expense. So without judgment as to whether that wrinkle is a cherished map of your venerable past, or a telltale sign that you've had better days, I asked what Sandra failed to ask, "What does beauty cost these days?"

Tell Me The Money

It can cost to learn what it costs, as many doctors charge as much as \$250 for the "find out" consultation. Of course, these consults offer more than just cost information. They also analyze your skin and give you the menu of what the doctor feels is viable, given your goals. Still, many go in with little understanding of whether they can afford any of the procedures. While, other candidates for nip and tuck assume it's all out of their league and stay away. I admit I am sometimes shy of asking costs, in general. Those antique shops that have secret

numbers on the tags instead of prices make me antsy.

But, emboldened as an “investigative shopper” I was determined to get the goods on what it might have cost Sandra if she stayed at home for her procedures, the on going costs my client’s will face, and admittedly, an interest at the price of eliminating my own “Charlie McCarthy” lines.

So here’s the general scoop on how much beauty money can buy.

Fill’er up

Perhaps the most active market in the beauty trade is what is currently called injection therapy. Surgeons and dermatologists both typically can administer the growing number of fillers that plump out lines around the mouth and eyes, hollows in cheeks and more. Much information on the effects, side effects, process and risks is available from the American Board of Plastic Surgery or the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. But when it comes to costs the three factors are 1) type of filler, 2) the amount you use, and 3) length of effectiveness.

For example, Restalyne, an hyaluric acid found in our bodies is a popular filler because it lasts from four to eight months. It is priced either by the syringe or by the quadrant of the face. The Long Island Plastic Surgical Group, located in Garden City, New York, www.lipsg.com, is one of the largest in the country. Because they cater to a national clientele prices are average. They charge by the syringe. \$600, for the first one, \$550, for the second and \$500 for the third. Dr. Davenport, a Webster Fellow who performs free surgery for children with birth defects in third world counties, also wields a mean Botox syringe. After explaining to me exactly how skin ages, he gave me a money tip. Under some circumstances the doctor will save unused portions for you if you come in shortly after the first treatment, for a touch up. Sort of like a medical doggy

bag.

Other groups charge by facial area. Forehead, nose to mouth lines (nasolabial folds), and mouth to chin lines are usually each one area. The costs range from \$500 to \$750 per area. Based on this, taking the per syringe policy is a better buy.

Restalyne is far from the only injectable filler. The grand daddy of fillers is collagen, an animal protein that requires an allergy test. Today’s collagens are made of natural protein from human dermis. Brands like Cosmodern or Cosmoplast, lasts three to six months, according to The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery www.surgery.org. At the Long Island Plastic Surgery group, injections cost \$400 for 1.0cc and \$750 for 2.0 cc. The Bovin Collagen like Zyderm and Zyplast, lasts two to four months and ring up \$350 for a 1.0cc syringe to \$700 for a 2.0cc syringe at LIPSG.

This is big business. New brands with slight differences in effect and staying power are coming to market. Bigger players are buying up lesser brands, giving doctors less room to to find price competitors for you. So many products are competing not on price, but on length of effectiveness. Radiance (the trade name for another filler) is a mineral like substance found in our bodies and purportedly will last up to two years, but it is currently off label, as is silicon. The US Food and Drug Administration reviews and approves fillers in the same way as it does medical devices. This means that they may be used off label as an approved medical treatment, but not specifically for cosmetic application. These come at higher prices, often \$750-\$900.

Get Nervy

Botox, a substance now on every one’s lips, and also around their eyes and forehead, was originally approved to stop facial twitches. Doctors discovered that their patients also wrinkled less over time. A phenomenon was born! Botox, or Botulinum Toxin Type A, is a drug that blocks nerve transmis-

sion and relaxes the underlying muscles. It is injected as a purified protein approved by the FDA, and can last four or more months. For some, the effect is cumulative, although it is marketed as disappearing. A survey by Allergan, owner of the Botox trademark, revealed that 89% of those surveyed said they saw an improvement after 30 days. Botox has been named one of the least costly treatments by the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery. It clocks in at \$400 per 1.0cc, \$600 per 1.5cc, and \$700 per 2.0cc, at LIPSG. Those that charge by quadrant can usually cover crow's feet, and forehead for a flat fee of around \$600.

Peel Away

At times beauty can be only skin deep, and all you need is to remove the outer layer of skin making room for more vital rejuvenation. These so-called "lunchtime peels" are done at doctor's offices, medical aesthetic institutions or "medical spas", and even at your local day spa or beauty salon. Competitors include procedures like Dermabrasion and Dermaplaning which exfoliate the top layer of skin, as well as photo light treatments, all meant to refresh the outer layer.

It is instructive to compare prices and services depending on where you go for the treatments. For example, an Alpha-Hydroxy Acid peel comes in at \$65 for 25 minutes at the posh Spa Shiki, at the Lodge of the Four Seasons in Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri. At medical spas, ones associated with a plastic surgery group, prices can be three times that cost, but the strengths of the peels much greater. At three of four medical spas I interviewed peel prices ranged from \$95-\$110 with a series of 6 for \$550. Stronger acidic peels, often unavailable at day and resort spas, averaged \$135, or \$700 for a series of 6.

In all cases, I found dermaplaning and micro dermabrasion less expensive, at \$60 in the Midwest up to \$150 at a Beverly Hills mall.

At the Medical Office, Surgery and Spa at Split Rock, in Wilton Connecticut, you'll find a melding of the beauty treatments, including manicures and pedicure along with a plastic surgery practice, all under the same roof. Split Rock offers a Placenta Collagen Facial for \$250, using real placenta nutrients (according to its brochure). Making a full circle with Sandra's quest is that the placenta comes from Russia. Their microdermabrasion with costs \$150, six treatments for \$750.

The Zamboni Machine

I was taken by Dr. Davenport's description of the laser process and other "resurfacing techniques," as akin to the Zamboni machine that scrapes off the outer layer of ice at hockey games, to smooth it down for the players. Lasers work on a deeper level than peels to remove red spots and unwanted pigmentation. The co2 laser and the chemical peel burn the skin off, as does the newer intense pulse lighting procedure. Both also claim to eliminate red spots and purportedly improve skin quality. It takes 8-10 weeks to grow the dead layers back.

Spot treatments clock in at \$150, and full faces at \$375. As with peels, a series is often recommended, saving a minimum of 10% on your bill.

Mineral Wealth

When we buy over the counter cosmetics we can read the list of ingredients and have a good idea of what they contain and in what proportion. Even the high priced ones may have only a smidgen of top ingredients, and many contain talc or FDC dyes. A new trend is to use mineral based cosmetics that are available for post and pre operative faces, and anyone looking for more than a lipstick and mascara.

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The leader in the field of “mineral medics,” my word not hers, is Jane Iredale. I confess I have long used her products since I came across them years ago at Gurney’s Inn in Montauk, New York. I encountered the products again in many medical spas and aesthetic centers. Iredale’s pharmaceutical grade, “sensitizer free” make up has been embraced as an after surgery or filler cover up for those that bruise or get red. If you decide on mineral based cosmetics, check for the use of certified organic sources where available, and especially FDA approved techniques for SPF ratings. To learn more check out www.janeiredale.com. Surprisingly the costs are often less than over the counter cosmetics and creams, at \$19.50 for lipstick, \$12.00 for liner, \$29 for blush.

Look Younger for Free

According to the wisdom of Dr. Davenport, we humans judge age by the smoothness of the skin and the space between the under eye and the top of the cheekbone, the less space the better. Accordingly, looking young depends upon reducing this distance and staying taut. All you need do is move your cheek pad higher and the distance is reduced. Do you need endoscopic surgery for this? No indeed. The fastest way to stretch your skin and reduce the cheek/lower eyelid space, as Dr. Davenport reminds us, is to smile, baby smile. And now, even our purses can smile!

