

by **CLAIRE MCCARTHY**

The Reveal of the Un-Extreme Makeover

True agelessness and beauty, I believe, comes from our spirited personalities. And without that inner essence, no amount of facial enhancements will convince otherwise. That said, I am incredibly excited about meeting with facial plastic surgeon Dr. Anna Petropoulos, who uses non-invasive procedures to “maintain, rejuvenate, freshen and reverse the signs of aging.” Could the results soon be that I’ll look in the mirror and see a refreshed outer image that more accurately reflects my inner attitude?

Trained at both Harvard and Ottawa Universities, Dr. Petropoulos has invested a total of 18 years to become board certified in the dual specialties of otolaryngology and facial plastic surgery, which means she brings the full knowledge and training of facial anatomy, function and aesthetic assessment to her armamentarium of rejuvenation, along with her artist’s eye.

Her New England Facial and Cosmetic Surgery Center, located in the Hunt Medical Building in Danvers, is a delightfully atypical medical office. A welcoming staff offers water or coffee. Relaxing arias of Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli fill the air. Statues and paintings including those of Aphrodite adorn the wall. (The Greek goddess of beauty Aphrodite, the doctor says, embodies her personal and professional philosophy: classic beauty with natural, symmetrical proportions.) The plum colored interior evokes a 5-star hotel feel transporting

NSM’s Editor-in-Chief gives a firsthand, er first-face, account on smoothing some lines and plumping up the volume – all without going under the knife.

you from the busy outside world to a sanctuary of relaxation, pampering and peace.

As the doctor shakes my hand, I size her up as prettier in person than on her classicface.com site. Her flawless skin is devoid of any signs of makeup. She happily shares that she too enjoys the results of the noninvasive rejuvenating treatments in her palette.

“I love what I do. My goal is to bring joy to my patients by restoring what they may have lost over time. I believe we age gracefully by maintaining what God gave us with safe, simple treatments. We live in a wonderful time to have these technologies avail-

analyze skin levels of sun damage, red areas, wrinkles, texture and pores. Based on our discussion of my personal goals and this digital analysis, Dr. Petropoulos outlines her plan and to my delight, it addresses each wish on my list!

Ah, what a happy surprise! I am first to be pampered! I am transported into the Center’s spa-like “sanctuary” to enjoy the “Pampering Ionzyme Medical Facial.” Richly luxurious and relaxing, it has the added benefits of using galvanic energy and sound waves to drive Vitamins A and C into skin cells at a 40,000 fold concentration,” Lexi, the medical esthetician ex-



able to us, to efface the ravages of gravity and sun damage.”

To make the assessment more objective, part of her consultation process includes the Visia Digital Skin Analysis. It employs UV light photography and computer technology to

plains. “It plumps up cells that shrink as we age and hence, plumps up thinning skin.” The procedure augments the carefully selected medical grade home care regimen they prescribed for me.

Botox is where we start. The doctor explains it is a “purified protein



derivative.” Hmm, I say that sounds so much better than “botulinum toxin.” She adds, “It’s a more accurate description, too.

“It relaxes offending muscles that cause wrinkles and it imparts a fresh, youthful, and happy appearance instead of a frowning, tense, or stressed look,” she says. “You’ll look your age but a fresher, happier version.”

Before beginning the 15-minute treatment, she explains she’ll make injections to relax my mouth’s down-pulling muscles to allow the up-pulling muscles to take over. This will help the marionette lines around my mouth and turn the mouth corners back up again. In addition, she’ll efface the furrow between the eyebrows, simultaneously achieving a gentile brow lift upwards and outwards. Clearly it takes specialized training and talent to achieve safe and natural-looking results. She, it turns out, trains other professionals nationally.

The treatment was quite painless

really; just a series of quick little pricks and much conversation and education so that I knew what she was doing and how she was tailoring the treatment for my specific needs.

During the days following, I told no one I had it done. Two people asked if I got a new haircut or color. “You look good. Relaxed.” I just smiled and said thanks!

The following week I got a “liquid face lift” using the dermal filler Juvederm.

“This natural injectable gel restores our fullness to the areas that hollow out with aging to make us look young and juicy again,” she says with a smile. Before starting she puts on the inspiring and moving Pachelbel’s “Canon” in the background. These gel injections were a little more intense than the benign Botox, yet the numbing medicine made it quite tolerable.

Now that I had my facial volume restored to a youthful appearance again, my skin texture with fine wrinkles and large pores was calling for help. The Sciton MicroLaserPeel was on the plan. It ablates the outermost layers of the skin allowing new baby-like skin to regenerate.

Because I chose the deepest laser peel possible, I looked sunburned and had to wear a thick slather of cream

to help it heal, so I was housebound for five days. (Other people choose lighter peels and can go to work the next day). What bliss really. I organized my closets and finally finished that overdue library book.

One week after the laser peel I have a follow up visit, but it’s more like a celebration among girlfriends. The entire staff is oohing and ahhhing. I’ve been a work in progress and today’s the unveiling. Dr. Anna is as excited as I am. “It’s amazing. You look so relaxed and demure – absolutely joyful!”

My next step? Maybe I will join the ranks of Hollywood divas like the 50-plus Ellen Barkin. She was recently quoted in Oprah’s magazine touting the Thermage treatments she gets a couple of times a year to tighten her skin and stay ahead of ever needing surgery.

Hmm, excuse me Doctor, can you tell me about Thermage?

I am getting the biggest kick out of pulling the visor mirror down while I’m driving and sneaking a peek at the face I used to remember. It’s like being a kid again getting ready for the prom. I practice pouting the sexy lips. I smile demurely with reactivated “up-turning” mouth muscles. The twinkle in my eye twinkles that much more brightly now that Dr. Anna worked her magic. I keep driving and smiling. It’s a new year and I’m defying gravity! ■