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GS MAGAZINE

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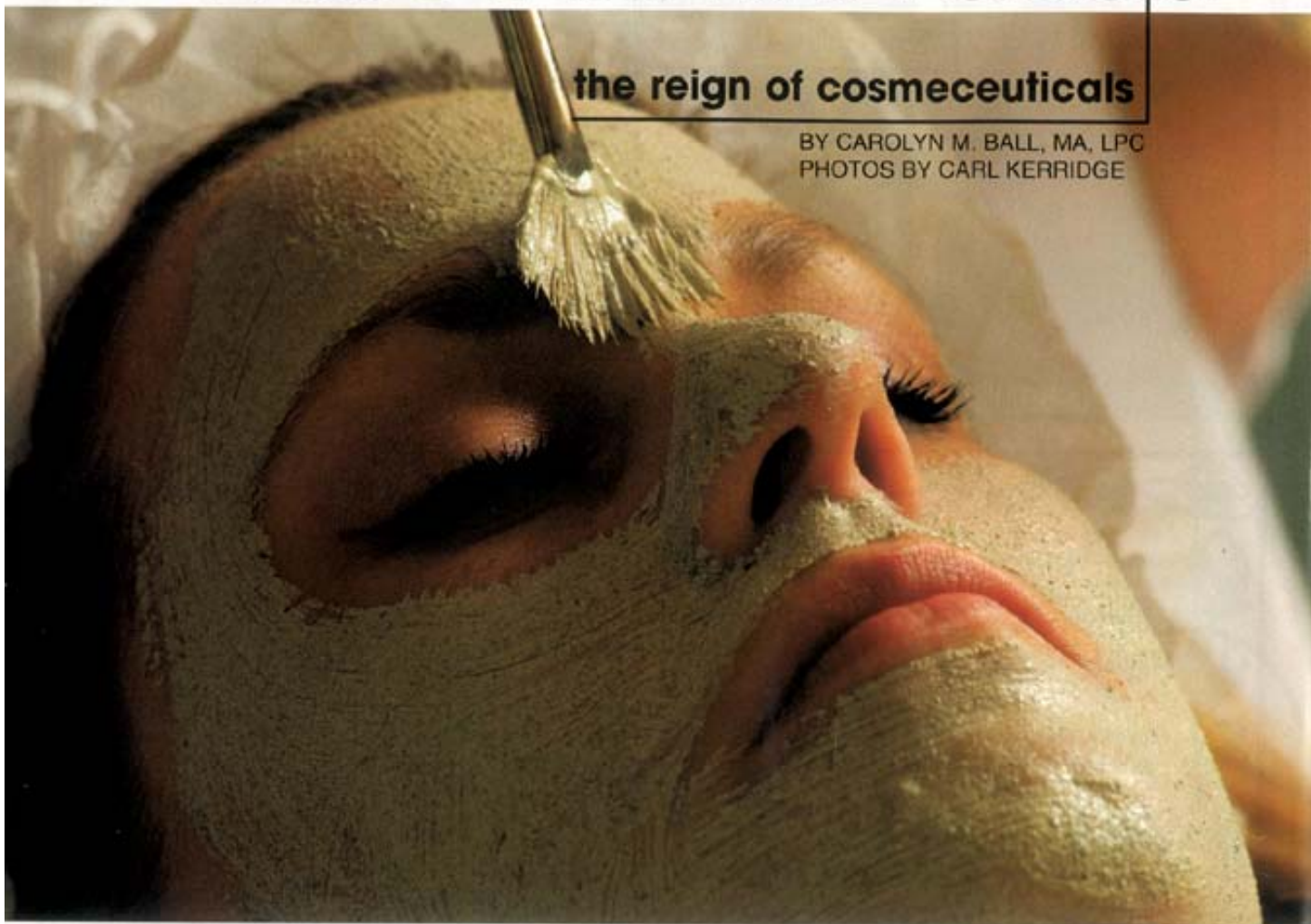


The Exclusive Lifestyle Magazine of the Grand Strand

more than skin deep

the reign of cosmeceuticals

BY CAROLYN M. BALL, MA, LPC
PHOTOS BY CARL KERRIDGE



No one would argue the fact that the Hibiscus Spa, located in Myrtle Beach's luxurious Marriott Grande Dunes Hotel, is a good place to start when looking for the latest in skincare. If my personal experience is any indication, the place isn't bad for the head and heart, either. The softly lit inner chambers are tucked away in a private corner of the large hotel, beckoning those in need of hard-earned relaxation with gentle music and subtle scents of lavender and citrus.

One of the spa's most requested treatments is the L'Athene facial. L'Athene is a product line of "cosmeceuticals" that has

been endorsed by the Spirit of Women Hospital Network. But what exactly is a "cosmeceutical"? The word is a combination of "cosmetic" and "pharmaceutical" that first appeared in the '90s. Until recently, pharmaceuticals used for skincare were casually referred to as cosmeceuticals. Although officially the FDA does not recognize the term, it is becoming more generally used within the cosmetic industry to refer to products that have a medicinal or drug-like benefit.

Holley Donovan, aesthetician at the Hibiscus Spa, performed my first (and hopefully not my last!) L'Athene facial. She led me to a room enveloped in just-right ambient color, light and music.



The holistic process began with a hand massage, after which they were placed into heated mitts, followed by a gentle scalp massage.

"L'Athene is very specific in what it does," said Donovan. "I myself use it, and I've seen such a huge difference in my skin. I worked for a physician before coming to the spa, so I know from experience that cosmeceuticals are the only way you can actually change the condition of your skin."

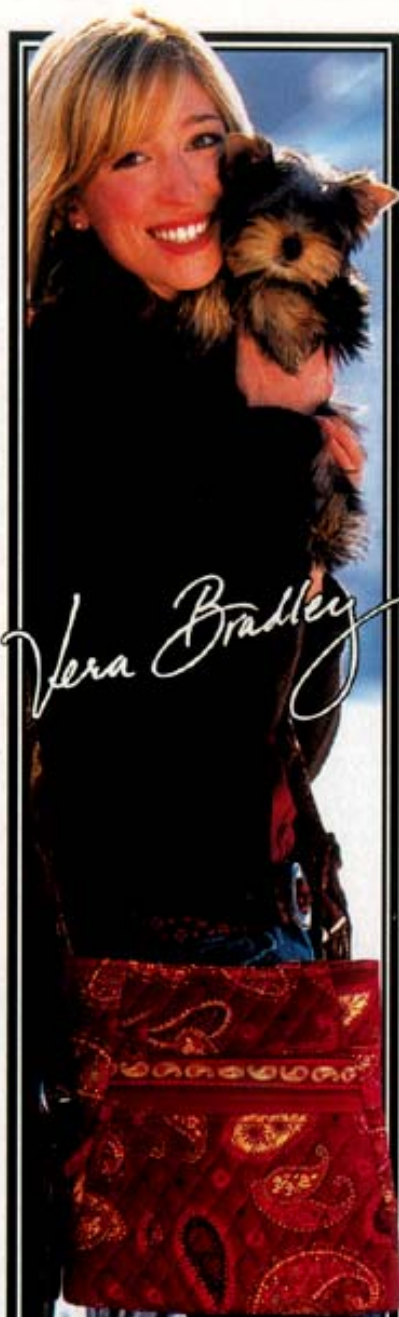
As she smoothed Primesse, a lavender-and-lemon-scented creamy cleanser, on my face, it felt as if my skin were getting a long drink after days of drought. After massaging the product on the face and throat, Donovan used soft sponges to remove the cleanser. Next came a papaya enzyme mask.

"Papaya helps to loosen the existing dead skin cells and prepares the skin for the microdermabrasion process," Donovan explained. Soft distilled water was then streamed across my face in order to keep the mask moistened. A lavender-scented eye mask was used to protect my eyes from the steam.

Next Donovan massaged the L'Athene microderm scrub into my neck area, gradually working her way up to my forehead. She explained that this procedure, even though time consuming, is the best way to thoroughly exfoliate the skin.

Once again, Donovan used the sponges to gently remove the scrub and applied the luscious L'Athene moisturizer that includes a low concentration of glycolic acid in its ingredients. Glycolic acid is an alpha hydroxy acid and natural exfoliant made from sugarcane, frequently used to improve the skin's appearance and texture. Next, she applied L'Athene's Eye Cream to moisturize the eye area. The product has bio-pharmaceutical grade vitamins to repair and strengthen the capillaries that can cause dark circles under the eyes. Before placing a hot towel on my face, she added a light layer of L'Athene Plant Oil, used for nourishing the skin and giving it a wonderful glow.

The last step was the application of L'Athene's Antioxidant Ultra-lifting Serum with pharmaceutical grade A, C and E vitamins. A final



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massage of my throat, shoulders and hands left me feeling I had surely just experienced the ultimate in pampering.

Who invented this magnificent banquet for the skin? And what were their other products? I'd had enough reactions to "beauty" products over the years to know that this experience was indeed a skin treatment that was more than skin deep.

I asked Jessica Durivage, spa manager, about the L'Athene line: "My first reaction was, hey, we'll give it a try. Now its our most popular facial." She spoke highly of the creators of the L'Athene product line, Nan Brown and Lil Bogdan.

In a phone interview, Nan explained, "L'Athene is a pure cosmeceutical skin treatment line... Our product is a skin treatment line, sold by plastic surgeons' offices, dermatologists, cosmetic surgeons, ob-gyns, laser centers, hospitals, and exclusive spas."

Exclusive is certainly the right word - to describe the entire

experience. After an afternoon of pampering, I felt confident that I had done something good for my skin as well as my mind and spirit.

Carolyn M. Bull, MA, LPC, is a Licensed Professional Counselor in private practice in Myrtle Beach, and the author of "Claiming Your Self-Esteem" and "Blessings in Disguise." With over twenty years' experience, she has helped many with such issues as relationships, self-esteem, work planning, life purpose, sexual abuse, dealing with cancer as well other trauma, and much more. She can be reached at 843-272-4114. GS





*The sweetness of
Southern Hospitality*



If I had my life to live over I'd like to make more mistakes next time. I'd relax. I would limber up. I would be sillier than I have been this trip. I would take fewer things seriously. I would take more chances. I would climb more mountains and swim more rivers. I would eat more ice cream and less beans. I would perhaps have more actual trouble, but I'd have fewer imaginary ones. You see, I'm one of those people who live sensibly and sanely hour after hour, day after day. Oh, I've had my moments, and if I had to do it over again, I'd have more of them. In fact, I'd try to have nothing else. Just moments, one after another, instead of living so many years ahead of each day. I've been one of those persons who never goes anywhere without a thermometer, a hot water bottle, a raincoat, and a parachute. If I had to do it again, I would travel lighter than I have. If I had my life to live over, I would start barefoot earlier in the spring and stay that way later in the fall. I would go to more dances. I would ride more merry-go-rounds, I would pick more daisies."

-Nadine Stair

"If I had to live my life over again, I would have spent more time at the Hibiscus Spa."
-Frequent Hibiscus Spa Client



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