



WOULD MADAM like a FACIAL with her FILLING?

Veneers, collagen, Botox, lip fillers... welcome to the dental spa, a one-stop shop for your smile makeover. Will you soon be saying, 'Ahhhh' to the dentist for all your cosmetic needs? By Caroline Brien. Photographs by Sean McMenemy

For most of us, a visit to the dentist ranks alongside smear tests and bikini waxing as a necessary evil. But that could be about to change. The dental industry is enthusiastically embracing a dramatic image overhaul and getting a facelift all its own. Forward-thinking dental surgeries are beginning to offer treatments from Botox to aromatherapy so clients can have all their needs met without having to leave the building.

In today's society, where the ability to multitask is vital, offering a menu of services under one roof is increasingly

Smile! Dentists are taking a holistic approach, looking at your whole face rather than focusing on just the teeth



Dental spas offer relaxing treatments after long hours in the chair to ease stress and speed up recovery time

◁ pervasive. But while in the US the medical spa trend is firmly entrenched, here it's the dental spa that's taking off. 'British people have woken up late to the benefits of a perfect Hollywood smile,' explains Ali Milner, group editor of *Aesthetic Medicine*, a new trade magazine on the industry. 'TV shows like *Extreme Makeover* have shown that ordinary people can have a beautiful smile, and the dentists who are pioneering such enhancements are quick to work out that they can go one step further and rejuvenate the whole face.'

So a notable symbiosis is evolving. Savvy dentists, who, let's face it, are

‘Pioneering dentists realise that they can go one step further and rejuvenate the whole of the face’

running a business, get to diversify into more profitable areas, while clients who are increasingly enthusiastic about quick-fix cosmetic enhancements get the benefits of a consultant who will take into account the whole of the face

rather than focusing on just the teeth.

Pioneering this trend is Lund Osler, the Knightsbridge clinic favoured by A-listers. Keen to precipitate an evolution in dentistry, it opened a one-stop salon, Face, a few doors down from its dental practice. 'People have realised how important the smile is, so they want great teeth,' says founder Surinder Hundle. 'But the lips are like curtains around the teeth and not many people have a symmetrical mouth. We can harmonise the differences with things like lip fillers.'

As well as dental services, such as teeth whitening and gum reshaping, Face offers Botox and wrinkle and lip fillers to help create a complete smile makeover. Throw in aromatherapy oils, energising fresh juice and colour therapy, and you have as relaxing a dental experience as is possible without being anaesthetised. There's also a hydrotherapy table and massage chair so clients can relax before and after treatment – which eases the muscle stress of long hours in the dentist's chair and helps speed recovery.

To offer such an array of treatments, Hundle employs a team of respected practitioners, each talented in their own field, from massage to injectables. 'We understand each other's philosophy and communicate to work out what's best for each client,' he says. So, be it non-surgical cosmetic treatment or reflexology, you know you are in highly qualified hands.

But don't expect to turn up for an appointment and come out later that day overhauled. To deter any hasty decision-making, clients come to Lund Osler for a lengthy consultation before any treatment plan is made. 'We say to everyone, "This isn't the kind of journey you want to rush,"' adds Hundle. 'We follow that journey with you and carry out alterations on the way so you don't make any rash decisions you regret later.'

Following Lund Osler's lead, dental spas are opening up around the country. Smile NW in north London offers general dentistry, veneers and injectables, as well as more traditional beauty treatments like Dermalogica facials. The Bloomsbury Dental Group in Warford has introduced 'comfort' treatments including paraffin wax hand treatments, aromatherapy and DVD screens. ▷



TV shows like *Extreme Makeover* mean we are more clued-up on cosmetic procedures

◁ Dental-spa in London provides full body massages to calm tense nerves, while Harvey Nichols in Manchester has a northern branch of Face, offering a menu designed to please urbane clients with more savoir faire than ever before.

'People are now more demanding and if they are coming for a life-changing experience, they want it in the most comfortable surroundings,' explains Dr Bhavna Doshi, facial rejuvenation director for The Perfect Smile studios in Hertfordshire. Unlike Lund Osler, The Perfect Smile dentists perform cosmetic treatments themselves. 'I believe dentists are the best people to carry out aesthetic treatments,' adds Doshi. 'We have specialist knowledge about the head, neck, face and skin.'

In terms of results, it can be the

difference between looking at the face as a whole and it being the sum of its parts. 'Changing the teeth can make a huge impact on the way the face looks,' says Doshi. 'Once that's done, we can see if you need any other treatment.'

The studios have a separate consultation room away from the surgery, computer imaging to show you how your new teeth will look, and non-surgical treatments such as Botox, collagen and isolagen – the new technique where your own skin cells are reproduced and injected into the face to stimulate natural collagen production.

However, dentists doing Botox are not without their critics. Besides being accused of amplifying the chronic shortage of NHS dentists, their qualifications in cosmetic enhancement have come into question.

While dentists argue that they have exceptional knowledge of the physiology of the face, detractors say that's not enough. 'Dentists are well trained but I think it's wrong to say they are specialists,' says Dr John Curran from the British Association of Cosmetic Doctors. 'There is a growing body of opinion that to carry out these procedures, they should be trained in dermatology and have a holistic approach, so you are getting the best and safest treatment. These are medical procedures, not beauty treatments, and should be treated as such. The real skill is knowing what not to do. And if something goes wrong, who would you rather have – a dentist or a doctor?'

Even some dentists have made the decision to stay within their own field. 'A one-stop shop suits some people and some dentists, but I prefer to let the specialists treat patients,' says Harley Street dentist Dr Anthony Zybutz.

The government too seems concerned and this year announced reforms of the regulations covering cosmetic surgery to deal with the number of unqualified people – from beauticians to nurses – administering treatments without a licence.

So, will you be booking Botox the next time you go the dentist? 'I think we'll see more places you can go for a complete makeover,' says Hundle. 'A place to do your hair, make-up and totally transform your look.' Not so much nip 'n' tuck as polish 'n' perfect. ■

SELECTING A DENTAL SPA

Image enhancement consultant Wendy Lewis advises how to make the most of your visit.

- * Remember: dentists aren't dermatologists. Some minor procedures are fine, but if you want something major, go to a specialist.
- * Make sure they have accreditation to the British Dental Association and ask about their training for non-surgical cosmetic treatments.
- * Have realistic expectations. You won't come away looking like a different person, but small things can have great effect.
- * Don't have everything done at once. Start with your teeth, then re-evaluate what else you want done as you may change your mind.
- * Ask how many procedures they have carried out to gauge their experience.
- * Get a personal recommendation.