THIS ISSUE FOR OUR BEAUTY BLOWOUT

OCTOBER 2017

# marie claire

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La Prairie's newest antiaging cream offers filler-like results

COMPLEXION NEWS

# Turn Up THE VOLUME

A taut, sculpted face used to be the beauty ideal for women of a certain age, but not anymore. **Jennifer Goldstein** makes a case for (subtle!) plumping

In the lobby of Zurich's Dolder Grand hotel, a man is slumped on the floor, resting his head on his luggage and looking exhausted, like he just got off a 14-hour flight. But something's not right. His complexion is pasty and weirdly puffy, so I step a little closer to see if he's OK. When I'm a few feet away, it dawns on me: He's not human. I must look totally spooked, because the receptionist rushes over to explain: This is the *Traveller*, a 1988 Duane Hanson sculpture that's part of the hotel's art collection.

I'm here in Switzerland to attend Art Basel and check out a Paul Coudamy sculpture commissioned by Swiss cosmetics company La Prairie in celebration of its caviar-infused antiaging skincare collection's 30th anniversary. But I didn't expect that the art appreciation would begin in my hotel lobby—or that it would be so creepy. In aesthetics, the aversion I'm feeling can be explained by the "uncanny valley," a hypothesis put forth in the 1970s by a Japanese robotics professor who found that most people are revulsed by androids and human replicas that appear almost, but not exactly, like real humans. Since I already have antiaging on my mind, this gets me thinking: Could the uncanny valley in reverse explain why many of us are unsettled by faces with obvious work done?

You know whose faces I'm talking about—the men and women with abnormally smooth, plump complexions devoid of the normal dips and hollows. "Sometimes you'll see them walking down the street, and subconsciously you note that something's off," says Dr. Shereene Idriss, a dermatologist at Union Square Laser Dermatology in New York City. "There's a difference between a woman who looks good for her age and a woman who looks like she had stuff done."

Part of the problem, according to experts, is volume. As more people get cosmetic injectable fillers to halt the signs of aging, there are inevitably some who end up looking overfilled. But it isn't necessarily the amount that's problematic; often, it's the placement. A little bit in the wrong spot can look odd, while four syringes in appropriate locations can look completely natural, explains Nanuet, New York, dermatologist Dr. Heidi Waldorf. "The work should be invisible—all

anyone should see is that you look younger, less tired, or happier," she points out.

But don't let the fear of looking like a *Real Housewives of Beverly Hills* extra prevent you from considering cosmetic injectables, because a beauty blowup isn't necessarily the fault of the product or the injector: "There are a lot of patients who want instant gratification, or who lose perspective, and they'll push the doctor to add more," notes Idriss. Some doctors acquiesce in order to keep a patient happy, even if it may not be their aesthetic preference.

Regardless of whether you go the filler route, there are now plenty of other ways to add volume subtly—not to mention less invasively. "As we age, loss of collagen and underlying fat in certain areas of the face, especially the cheeks, can lead to a sunken appearance. You end up looking stern and tired," says chemist Jacqueline Hill, Ph.D., the director of strategic innovation and science for La Prairie. Earlier in the day, we visited Art Basel to admire Coudamy's sculpture, a tower of lacquered cellular forms that look like they're encrusted in caviar, and now we're chatting over a celebratory beluga-laden dinner. Hill tells me that about three years ago, her company set out to reverse the facial-thinning process with a superpotent caviar extract that had skin-volumizing potential. She and her colleagues ended up combining it with a brown-algae extract, which boosts the activity of collagen and elastin synthesis, and magnolia-bark extract, which has been shown to increase the volume of the skin's fat cells, to create the new Skin Caviar Absolute Filler. Women who tried the rich facial cream, which doubles as a moisturizer, in clinical trials saw impressive results: After eight weeks of use, 90 percent of them had improved cheek plumpness, 88 percent had increased firmness, and 78 percent had thicker skin.

Plumper and thicker, it seems, have replaced smoother and tighter as the most covetable skin attributes. "Back in the '90s, plastic surgeons would sometimes remove women's facial fat pads to give them that gaunt appearance, but people don't really want that anymore because you need that fat to maintain a youthful look over time," says Idriss. In addition to La Prairie's new caviar extract, other ingredients can be beneficial. Retinol has a reputation as an excellent exfoliator and wrinkle smoother, but it also turns up the volume, according to Idriss. "It's not like it exfoliates so quickly that you're going to end up with tissue-paper-thin skin if you use it for years. Over time, it boosts collagen production, so it actually increases the density of your skin," she explains.

There's also something to be said for moisturizing ingredients. "You can't just think about collagen and elastin, or fat underneath; you have to think about all layers of the skin," says New York City plastic surgeon Dr. Melissa Doft. "As you get older, you also have fewer glands in your skin, so you're not making as many oils." La Prairie's caviar extract is rich in omega fatty acids, which improve skin's barrier function, so you retain more moisture, but hyaluronic acid, the same ingredient used—in a modified form—as an injectable filler, is also helpful. "Applied topically, it sits in the upper layer of the skin and pulls moisture from the environment and the skin below to keep the skin's barrier intact," explains Waldorf. Skin is more hydrated and ends up looking plumper. You can find the ingredient in StriVectin's hyaluronic serum and Murad's "hydro-dynamic" moisturizer. It's also in Peter Thomas Roth's hyaluronic-acid-infused patches for plumping under your eyes (that area tends to look more hollow as we age because the fat pads located there "lose volume and start to drift downward," says Doft).

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> *—NYC DERMATOLOGIST DR. SHEREENE IDRISS*

For a multipronged complexion-volumizing plan, there's one more (admittedly old-school) strategy to consider: Eat something. "I tell my patients, starting in your mid-40s, it's your face or your ass—you can't have it both ways. If you lose weight, it's going to age your face, but maintaining or gaining weight can help because you do want that volume," says Idriss.

My personal recommendation: Smooth on the La Prairie, then get yourself a bag of potato chips, dip them in some crème fraîche and caviar, and chow down. Who says an inside-outside approach to antiaging can't be decadent? **mc**

## *Bounce Back* NEW SKINCARE AND SUPPLEMENTS CAN RE-VOLUMIZE YOUR COMPLEXION

1. **LA PRAIRIE** Skin Caviar Absolute Filler, $590. 2. **PETER THOMAS ROTH** Water Drench Hyaluronic Cloud Hydra-Gel Eye Patches, $48. 3. **OLLY** Vibrant Skin Plump Berry Supplements with Hyaluronic Acid, Collagen, and Sea Buckthorn, $14. 4. **STRIVECTIN** Advanced Acid Rehydrate + Replump Hyaluronic Dual-Response Serum, $79. 5. **MURAD** Hydro-Dynamic Ultimate Moisture, $72. For information on where to buy, see Shopping Directory.