

Destination: Rejuvenation

The new Estetica Beauty outlet in Sembawang Shopping Centre.

A short respite and beauty re-charge in the heartlands.

It was with great trepidation when I was asked to review the Body and Face Therapies at Estetica Beauty Salon. I must confess, I am an avid overseas spa whore, where my usual haunts are mainly in Thailand and Bali. I've got nothing against local establishments. It's just that when I do pamper myself, I'd like the whole experience to be totally relaxing (preferably out of Singapore and not in between rush hours) with exquisite tranquil settings to match and appease my demanding visual senses.

Upon entering the new Estetica Beauty Studio at Sembawang Shopping Centre, I'm liking the polished white on white interior, which channels a very chic New York beauty bar. If the name Estetica Beauty hasn't already sound familiar to you having been in the market since the late seventies, then the clean and crisp salon ambience promises that you will be in the hands of skillful beauty professionals.

I'm about to experience the Relaxing Body Massage while my girl-friend in tow is trying the Oxygen Glow Facial. Will

the therapies rejuvenate these mentally (moi) and physically drained (said girlfriend), occasionally deranged (the girlfriend and moi), hard working girls? Who can say? Going in, all we know is we are glad for these much needed albeit short respite.

RELAXING BODY MASSAGE (45 mins)

After changing into a disposable panty and nothing else, my journey to relaxation begins with a waft of lemon grass infused massage oil. The warm massage oil coupled with the soothing and rhythmic hands of the experienced therapist, felt blissful.

She pressed down on my aching shoulder and neck deftly, working her magic on my tired and stiff muscles. Slowly I get used to being pummelled, pulled and pinched. The result is thoroughly relaxing. I feel calm, invigorated and redirected in the midst of instrumental piped-in music save for an occasional drilling noises coming from a neighbouring shop. The mall housing the salon is newly refurbished as I was told. So future salon patrons will be glad to know that building noises will eventually cease once all tenants are settled in.

OXYGEN FACIAL (45 mins)

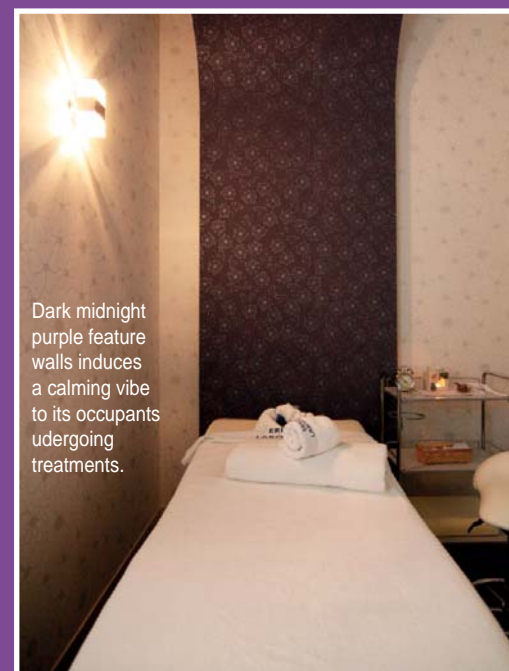
Madonna loves it, so too does Donatella Versace and Gwen Stefani apparently. As the girlfriend says, "If it's good for the divas and legends, it's good enough for me."

The theory of the facial is that pressurized oxygen speeds the skin's absorption of moisturizing agents. The procedure involves a high-pressure blast of oxygen that feeds serums packed with vitamins, minerals and collagen into your skin. The result is a clearer, plumper smoother face and a younger looking you. An immediate change in appearance is common.

"The beauty of this facial is that you'll get immediate results," explains Karen Lam, the Business Manager at Estetica Beauty. "It is suitable for all skin types and promises no skin irritations."



Cosy consultation corner



Dark midnight purple feature walls induces a calming vibe to its occupants undergoing treatments.

During the facial, the therapist work with a nozzle that puffs chilly oxygen into the skin, pushing in the nourishing serum as it goes within. She is only allowed about 20 minutes of relaxation with a pampering face mask before emerging looking like she has just spent two weeks skiing in the Swiss Alps.

Indeed, a full inspection of the friend's face reveals a glowing and rosy complexion as though she is a nubile 16 year old again! After an hour of having oils drizzled

and every ounce of our body and facial pores tweaked and teased, the friend and I feel almost calm until we stepped out of the salon and are immediately reminded that we have to rush to miss the peak hour traffic nightmare.

Of course we do understand, massages and a host of treatments to induce beauty and a well-being is a way of life, not just a gift certificate. But we have to start somewhere. And we do have to re-charge don't we?



A treatment room with ensuite bathroom.



Karen Lam, the Business Manager at Estetica Beauty dispensing advice to client.

busy schedule.

Smart Wedding Diary chats with Karen Lam, Business Manager at Estetica Beauty

The professional in Face and Body Therapies offers her tried and tested suggestions for a fabulous looking bride.

SWD: How would a bride-to-be benefit from a prescribed beauty regime?

Karen Lam: Any bride would be feeling overwhelmed and stressed out while preparing for her big day. A tailored regime would help to identify problematic skin conditions and recommend the necessary prescription and cautionary measures to improve her skin problems.

SWD: What's a suitable time period for this beauty regime before wedding day? Why?

KL: I think a bride should work backwards from the event day and identify what she wants to achieve. For example, she may have serious acne problems or just mild facial blemishes but both equally need adequate attention and require time to remedy. A good time frame is at least six to eight months in advance, to rectify bad skin conditions and three months for minor beauty adjustments.

SWD: Estetica Beauty has come a long way since its early neighbourhood hole-in-the-wall days, some 30 years ago. How does it stay competitive?

KL: We are in the service industry, and we aim to provide value for money services and convenient

locations to our clients. We aspire to make beauty a lifestyle available for all heartlanders.

SWD: What is/are Estetica Beauty's most popular treatment (s)? Why?

KL: Our Signature Eye Treatment and Oxygen Glow Facial. The latter is suitable for all skin types and displays immediate results while the former is a practical treatment or dark eye circles and the fine lines most visible around the eye contours.

SWD: The chain is reported to be the first to introduce the concept of Multi Therapy? What is it? And how does one benefit from Multi Therapy?

KL: As no two individuals are alike, the concept of Multi Therapy involves prescribing a series of customized treatments to remedy a person's unique skin condition.

SWD: What is Estetica Beauty's corporate direction in the next five years?

KL: We are a strong establishment. In this current economic meltdown, we are still expanding and will be opening two more branches in the later half of the year. In the long term, we will be working towards creating a strong regional presence .

SWD: Having been a bride 2 years, what were your beauty woes?

KL: My wedding gown then was a bare-back number. So I was neurotic about having a flawless back on my wedding day. I commit myself to a strict regimen of back scrub, mask and facials every three weeks.

SWD: Do you have a personal beauty regime, which you simply cannot do without on a daily basis?

KL: Moisturise! Moisturise! Moisturise!

SWD: What beauty advice(s) do you have for the anxious bride? For the busy working women?

KL: Before a bride gets lost in the midst of preparations, she should set realistic beauty goals to achieve in say three months before the wedding. That way she will have time to schedule treatments and see visible progress. Similarly, a working woman should adhere to a beauty routine in her hectic schedule. For example, she can schedule to have a monthly facial to fit her

SWD: In these trying, penny pinching times, beauty is after all an extravagance. If a bride can only afford ONE treatment in the hands of a professional, what should it be? Why?

KL: I would say the Oxygen Glow Facial. It improves blood circulation in the face, reduces facial blemishes and desensitizes facial pores. The facial also has no side effects at all.

SWD: Please complete the sentence: A beautiful bride...

KL: embraces who she is and radiates her confidence from within.