

The DRACULA EFFECT

We head to Richmond's Bodyvie Clinic to find out why Vampire and Opera mask facials are all the rage right now

Words: RACHEL MANTOCK

Contrary to popular belief, the platelet rich plasma facial, better known as the vampire facelift, is not so much about smearing blood all over your face, like famous selfies by the likes of Kim Kardashian would suggest. It's more to do with the platelets present inside your blood, which are extracted using a special solution before the injection process starts, leaving your crimson red blood behind as a waste product. The liquid that actually makes it into the syringe is more of a watered down Lucozade colour, which is teaming with powerful platelets that super speed up your skin's own repair and renew process, putting your collagen production and other natural anti ageing systems into overdrive. This results in a more plumped up, radiant appearance and younger looking skin in those delicate areas that age the quickest, like around the eyes and mouth.

Richmond's Bodyvie Clinic is the place if you always want to be in the know about the latest in the aesthetics industry, something that moves at an ever-increasing rapid pace with technology that's advancing at an astounding level, almost handing doctors the key to the fountain of youth. There's a big shift towards the faux natural look, whereby subtle work has been done, but nobody other than the professionals would be able to suss it out. Part of this shift towards the au naturelle includes procedures that utilise and unlock your body's own anti ageing material, rather than using synthetic

fillers. That's where platelet rich plasma comes in – it's your body's own natural source of Hollywood filler. As it's made up of your own DNA, the risk of unfavourable allergic reactions is greatly reduced and any anxiety over having man made materials sitting under your skin for months on end is alleviated.

Interestingly, the use of platelet rich plasma actually got its start in the burn and recovery departments of hospitals, as it significantly helped the healing process when it came to bone, sports and serious burn injuries that required skin grafts. It wasn't until later that the industry put two and two together and realised it could be greatly beneficial for facial aesthetics, achieving soft facelift effects with virtually no downtime and minimal invasiveness.

I'm like a bright eyed, bushy tailed child in a candy shop when it comes to trying the latest in the aesthetics industry and the wonderful team at Bodyvie were probably taken aback as to how keen I was to have my blood drawn from my arm and pin pricked back into my face – I practically leapt into the treatment chair. Bodyvie's Medical Director and Lead Physician, Dr Andrew Weber, describes the platelet rich plasma treatment as groundbreaking, something that produces significant results after only a few treatments. He explains: 'The younger you are, the more rejuvenating your blood's platelets are. So, ironically,

these treatments work better on younger people, but they are the ones that need it least. Although they still work wonderfully on older people, more treatments are needed. We'd recommend starting PRP treatments in your late 20s or early 30s, as prevention is always better than cure.'

Being a clinic that relishes in taking things that one step further, Bodyvie put me under the coveted Opera face mask, a robotic looking white mask that emits infrared light to reduce inflammation and revive the skin, sometimes with a collagen paper mask underneath. It's done the rounds on Instagram, with the likes of Justin Bieber posting Transformer snaps from inside the treatment room.

Platelet rich plasma is your body's own natural source of Hollywood filler

Combining the Vampire and Opera mask facial in one treatment is the ultimate in monster aesthetics, as the Opera mask got its

name from its connotations with the *Phantom of the Opera*. As horror movie classic as you might look during treatment, you'll look ten times more high definition girl next door movie in the weeks ahead. And if you are going to entrust your precious platelets to anyone, let it be Bodyvie's Dr Weber: he'll have them working like Duracell bunnies to rewind the clock on your precious skin.

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