

Small changes one at a time create a new look to live by

I gave up on making New Year's resolutions a long time ago. After realizing that bold declarations merely set off a frenzy of activity that raised a lot of dust and little more, I decided to approach goals with small steps taken one at a time. That's how I got stuck on the idea of improving my looks with subtle changes to my eyes.

Enter Sherry York at Kisma Hair Company and Spa (512-349-9992). A licensed aesthetician and facial specialist, York described the eye area's unique

composition. "The (skin around the) eye is a very thin tissue. It has a different pH than the rest of your skin; it's very delicate," she said.

York recommends the Rejuvenating Eye Zone Treatment, one of her favorite treatments in the skincare department, as a complement to any spa facial because it alleviates dark circles and puffiness. When asked why people experience problems with the area around the eyes, she said that allergies, fatigue and hereditary factors play a role. Makeup use over the years may also dye the skin.

The Eye Zone Treatment detoxifies and relaxes. "It helps to build up blood vessels and removes any fluid from the lymphatic system out of the area," said York.

Her explanation was incentive enough to schedule an appointment. What I got was a soothing, hydrating and nourishing session.

York began with a facial. She mapped out my face with a light massage as she pressed into the dips, hollows and ridges. York continually ran fingers over the crease between my eyes. Soon enough, the furrowed forehead, the stiffened jaw and the tightened eyelids retreated. Her gentle touch persuaded me to focus on my skin while she quite literally smoothed away my worries. Thoughts of unfinished work and upcoming deadlines were banished as I concentrated on the alternating sensations of warmth and cold from the various crèmes and applications.

After several cleansings, York applied an ice-cold gel masque. As she spread gel over my eyes, the candlelight filtering through my eyelids quickly dimmed until I lay in midnight darkness. York massaged my hands and arms while we waited for the masque to congeal.

I remembered York's words, "The treatment combines gentle massage techniques and hydrating state-of-the-art products to make even the most tired eyes come alive." Truth is, she brought alive more than just tired eyes. With glowing skin, tingling senses and a refreshed mind, I moved on to the next phase of renewal.

Owner Tara Ghulam of Tara's Salon and Spa (512-252-7230) knows a thing or two about eyebrows. She says more than a thou-

sand clients from Austin and beyond seek her out for threading. What's *that*, you say? Ghulam shapes eyebrows with a popular Indian and Middle Eastern technique using cotton thread. She wraps multiple strands around her fingers and then twists the cotton across the surface of the skin, pulling hair from the follicles in swift strokes. Gone are the days of tweezing and waxing.

As I lay back in my chair, Ghulam picked up my hands and guided them over to my left eye. "Like this," she said. With one hand over my eyebrow and the other on my eyelid, I stretched my skin taut. Then she began. Although her touch was light, I experienced some stinging.

Sure, eyebrow threading is not a painless process and may cause a few tears, but it *is* more gentle to the skin than conventional waxing. Ghulam noted that threading acts as an defoliant, while waxing "takes the skin off."

Sheryl Sims, Ghulam's regular client, said, "I stopped coming for a little bit because it hurt. But now I come every two weeks, and it doesn't hurt so much. I just love the way it shapes my face. I don't even have to put on any liner or anything... everybody compliments my eyebrows."

Ghulam agreed and said, "With eyebrow threading, I have more control so I can make an arch. I can make it thin, I can make it thick. I follow the natural line."

Ghulam has been threading for twenty-five years. At fourteen, she opened up her first threading business in Pakistan. Even back then,

people recognized her talent. "It was a very small house but it was very, very good. There was no place to sit, so everybody (was) just standing because they wanted me to do it," she said. Whenever Ghulam visits her homeland, she makes sure she comes back with a new supply of cotton thread.

For more eye care, Keith Kristofer Salon and Spa (512-233-1910) offers the Revitalizing Eye Rescue as a stand-alone treatment or addition to a facial. According to aesthetician Beckie Kipp, the treatment includes a "vitamin-based exfoliation followed by a massage using products that will hydrate and calm the eye area." For home care, she said, "When applying product to the area, pat the product in, versus rubbing, in order to help prevent sagging and wrinkles. When you wake in the morning is when you will most likely notice puffiness; tapping around the eye area will better circulation and help reduce puffiness and dark circles."

What about the final look? I loved it. My eyebrows, now thinner and defined with a slight arch, created a nice frame for my eyes that opened up my face. Thanks to York, my skin appeared limpid and refreshed. For days afterwards, I reveled in my newfound look and received my fair share of compliments.

This time, a few small changes created a new look for the new year. York plans on offering eyelash extensions soon. Can you guess my next step? ☺

