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## Features

# New year, new looks

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**DENNIS ODA**

dennis oda / doda@staradvertiser.com @Caption1:The Madonna Lift reduces lines and wrinkles around the eyes and lifts the eyebrows using a laser that stimulates collagen production, smoothing wrinkles and tightening skin. Below, one of ophthalmologist Melanie Tantisira's patients, Ginny Groeneyke, before and after surgery. Geri Berger's photos are at fashiontribe.staradvertiserblogs.com.

Let's get one thing straight: I think you're perfect as you are, but those in the esthetics industry know there is no satiating the appetite for new treatments that promise to keep us looking better and younger. Fifty may be the new 30, but generally not without a trip or two to a spa or esthetics clinic.

Here are some new services being offered around town.

## MADONNA LIFT

*A celebrity-inspired procedure promises to smooth and tighten one's droopy eye area*

Moms always warn kids who make ugly expressions that their faces will freeze that way, but they never caution against smiling, the launching pad of wrinkles and crow's feet.

After smiling her way through public appearances as Mrs. Hawaii International in 2004, Geri Berger said, "I started noticing stuff on my face, and it was like, 'What is this, what is that?' All the year's smiling left me with crow's feet and lines."

She mentioned it to her gym workout buddy, Melanie Tantisira. Without skipping a beat, Tantisira, an ophthalmologist, said, "I can take care of that."

Although nothing will stop your skin from drooping, Tantisira, of True Vision Center, said genetics controls the extent to which your muscles tug and stretch your skin to form crow's feet and wrinkles. You could stave off the damage by not smiling, but "you want to keep your full range of expressions."

Current treatments allow more people to keep those expressions while retaining a youthful look.

Many wouldn't think of going to their eye doctor for beauty advice, but ophthalmologists were at the forefront of the contemporary cosmetic and esthetic medicine movement.

"Ophthalmologists were the first to use Botox," said Tantisira, who started her career 18 years ago with the Honolulu Medical Group before establishing a private practice eight years ago, adding esthetic services to her eye care repertoire.

Botox was originally used to control eye spasms, a medical condition called blepharospasm so extreme in some cases that patients couldn't keep their eyes open. Botox relaxes the muscles controlling the spasm, and doctors noticed a side effect was the smoothing of skin around the eyes. Once word got out, cosmetic surgeons added it to their arsenal of youth-preserving treatments.

Berger, a marketing, design and creative consultant and owner of Pineapples Boutique and Bali Batiks Inc., started using Botox, but now in her early 40s, she noticed her eyelids starting to droop. Once again she turned to Tantisira, who a year ago started offering the "Madonna Lift," a fractional carbon-dioxide laser treatment pioneered by Dr. Bruce Katz of the Juva Skin and Laser Center in New York and named after the entertainer, who is one of his most famous patients.

"We knew that CO2 lasers do produce tightening by going deep into the dermis to stimulate collagen and healing," Tantisira said. "It's good for any kind of lifting and tightening, but no one was using it on the eyelids because of fear of damaging eye tissue."

Fractional CO2 works by using pinpoint columns of energy to target a specific area while leaving surrounding tissue intact. Katz developed metal shields that are inserted into the eye for protection, and the treatment is delivered in about 5 minutes per eye. Generally, three sessions are recommended, at a total cost of about \$1,500.

In the past, to get the same results would have required surgery at a cost of about \$2,800 to \$5,500. An individual with a half inch or more of droopy skin will probably require surgery rather than the laser to remove the excess skin.

After a Madonna Lift, "People should expect some sensitivity around the area, but it's usually not bad, and they can go back to applying makeup the next day," Tantisira said.

Eyelid and neck tissue are the thinnest on the body, which makes these areas the first to start wrinkling and sagging. After treatment, one can expect to see tightening of the skin around the eye, diminished crow's feet and an eyebrow lift — but the look is natural.

"I didn't want to look fake or different," Berger said. "Friends don't even know I do this, and when they find out, they ask, 'Can you feel your face?' Yes, I can feel my face, and I'm not expressionless."

She acknowledged that society sends a message to women that aging is undesirable, and she is not immune to the pressure. But just as she goes to the gym to keep her body in shape, she hopes the laser treatments will eliminate the need for more serious measures.

"I know I'm not 20 anymore. I'm interested in maintenance to avoid going under the knife," she said.

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True Vision Center is in the Medical Arts Building, 1010 S. King St., Suite 503. Call 591-

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