

What lies beneath

Ruth Supple faced up to her future when she became the first person in Northampton to try out a radical new machine that tells you how old you really are beneath the skin ...



▲ Hayley Jones and Dr Askari Townshend demonstrate how Beau Visage works

WANT to know what your real skin age is and find out where you're likely to develop wrinkles in the future?

Thanks to a new treatment soon to be available in Northampton, you can literally face up to ageing.

You won't need a crystal ball to see what you could look like in 10 or 20 years time. Beau Visage predicts that for you, using the latest technology, which allows a camera-operated machine to photograph up to 2mm beneath the surface of your skin.

It's been described as the ultimate skin consultation and, from April, Beau Visage will be offered at The Townshend Skin Clinic in St Giles Terrace, Northampton.

Dr Askari Townshend, owner of the clinic, invited me to be the first to test out the skin imaging system, that uses a technology known as siascopy to see blood, melanin and damage beneath the skin. By taking a few quick and painless pictures, Beau Visage can assess the distribution of blood, melanin and sun damage in your face and calculate your skin age.

Dr Townshend said: "Everyone assumes that they need botox to prevent wrinkles and slow down ageing but that's not always the case. The Beau Visage results will tell me whether someone needs injectables like botox, or if they could do with something like intense pulse light (ipl) to help with discolouration of the skin, which is just as ageing. It gives them a shopping basket of treatment and products to help them and a detailed plan of action."

Beau Visage tracks changes in your skin's health and age to help determine whether skin

care products and treatments are working for you and highlight areas that might require attention. The new system can even see wrinkles that are yet to appear on the skin's surface, allowing time to implement change and maintain a more youthful appearance for longer. You may be shocked at the images, but Beau Visage provides an opportunity for women to take a proactive approach towards their appearance.

Annie Brooking, CEO of Astron Clinica, the company behind Beau Visage said: "Beau Visage is the ultimate skin

imaging and consultation system, a must for women who really want to educate themselves about the health of their skin. By using Beau Visage to analyse the skin, women can plan their beauty regime accordingly and, in some cases, even help turn back the clock. For those of us who are serious about looking after our skin, a Beau Visage consultation should become routine."

Hayley Jones, of Beau Visage, explained how the skin imaging system works.

She said: "Images of the skin are taken by the camera from three different angles – left, middle and right – and we can then show the client what is happening underneath their skin using siascopy.

"This lets us see up to 2mm beneath the skin's surface and, from the four images we are given, can deduce how someone's face is going to age."

The first of those photographs is a normal, colour image, which shows what skin type you are and where breakouts and dehydration are on the complexion.

The second image is a blood view of the skin, where you can see any problems with red veins before they come to the surface. It also highlights any acne and rosacea.

"Dr Askari can then remove these problems before they come out," explained Hayley.

The third picture reveals a melanin view of the underlying skin, showing any discolouration or age spots.

Lastly, the fourth photo shows the level of sun damage lurking under your skin, one of the worst contributors to ageing.

The machine analyses the images and works out a skin age score for you, which may be a lot higher than your real age, based on the damage you've already inflicted on your complexion through things like smoking, drinking, sun exposure, pollution, diet and so on.

It can also be programmed to figure out how many wrinkles

you have and where they are, as well as where they are mostly likely to appear in the future.

It's available for anyone over 20. Although she's only 25, wrinkle-free and with clear skin, Hayley has already been using Beau Visage and having treatments like light therapy.

Why?

"I want to make sure that, by the time I'm 35, my skin will still look as good," she said. "I'm having treatments now to prevent problems occurring in the future."

Once you've had your skin analysed and been told its "real age", the practitioner will recommend treatments and products to help correct any problems and try to slow down the ageing process.

You'll also be able to see "before" and "after" photographs to document your results.

Hayley added: "People coming into a clinic like this are concerned about ageing and want to know what's happening. It may seem scary but this is designed to be positive, to help someone know where problems are likely to occur and find out what they can do about them.

"It can still make a difference even if you're 60. You're never too old to stop caring for your skin! I've seen drops of over 10 years in age after just a couple of ipl treatments with clients," claimed Hayley.

Dr Townshend said: "You may need to have a couple of ipl treatments when you are 40 and will see visible results within days. You don't have to dedicate 10 years of your life to making improvements to your skin."



■ The Townshend Skin Clinic, 7 St Giles Terrace, Northampton, will be offering free consultations of Beau Visage when it is introduced at the clinic in April. Telephone 01604 637934 or visit www.townshendskinclinic.co.uk for more information.

"FACE OF MY FUTURE"

FINDING out what my "real" skin age is and where I'm likely to wrinkle in the future was a scary prospect.

I've never smoked and have inherited fairly wrinkle-free skin from my gran who looks 10 years younger than her 87 years.

But I've been guilty of soaking up the sun, enjoying the odd glass of wine or three and have also inherited my mum's rosy cheeks, which flush at the slightest tipple.

So the thought of testing Beau Visage left me in two

cheeks will get redder. It's an average level of damage for your age now, but by the time you reach 50 it will be worse."

Gulp. The third and fourth shots showed my melanin levels and age spots caused by sun damage and what my face could look like in 10 years time if I carry on with no treatment.

Hayley said it didn't look as though I'd experienced much sun damage, which was good news, but that there were a couple of age spots on my cheeks and nose.

She added: "As you age,



minds. Would I be jumping for joy like I did on the Wii Fit where my fitness age came out at 35, seven years less than my real age, or would I be on that couch ready to have anything injected into a face 10 years older than my 42 years?

The first colour image was eerie, like looking at a death mask of myself. Hayley said: "Your skin looks smooth and well hydrated and the surface seems in quite good condition. It's not overly oily or overly dry."

So far, so good.

The second shot was stranger still and pictured above. It looks bright red as you see all the blood flow underneath your face.

Hayley explained: "Your cheeks, chin and nose areas are not as flawless as they could be and there are patches where the blood flow has pooled. As you get older, they will get worse, your

you will probably get more lines around your eyes and upper lip. You are more prone to discolouration than wrinkles though and this will be more of a problem to you than wrinkles.

"Most people associate ageing with wrinkles. But skin discolouration is also ageing."

The wrinkle analysis confirmed this but then came the bit I'd been waiting for. What's my "real" skin age?

Beau Visage chooses part of your face to analyse mathematically.

My cheeks came out at 34 and my forehead at 31.

"You'd only need a couple of ipl treatments and we would be able to lower that for you," added Hayley.

Tempting though it is to have treatments, I think I may let nature take its course . . . unless, of course, Dr Townshend can take me back to my 20s. If only.