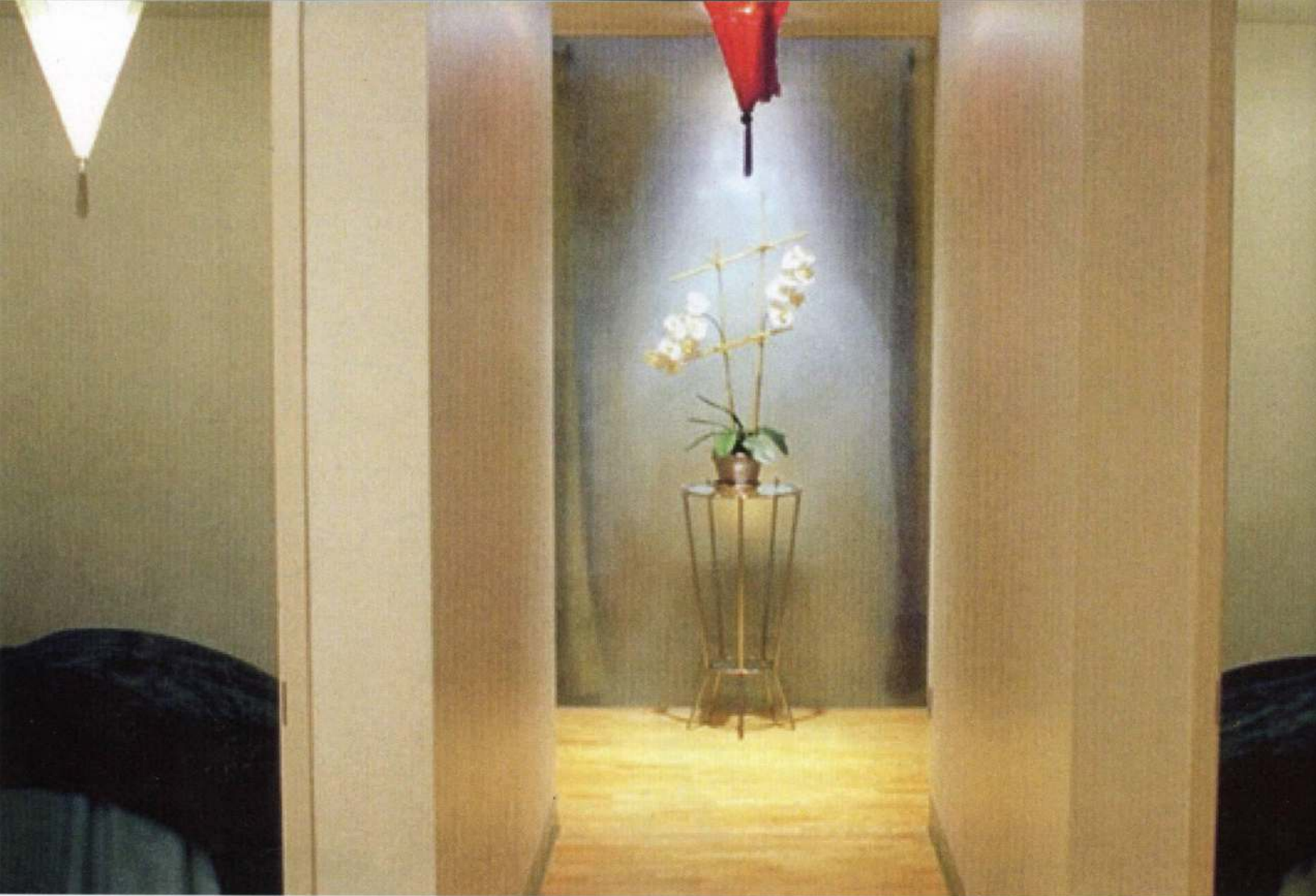


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T O D A Y ' S C H I C A G O W O M A N



ANNE
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MED SPAS:
THE
**BEAUTY
HYBRID**

By Jessica Girdwain



Opposite page top
The Tiffani Kim Institute in
River North

Opposite page bottom
True Skin Care Center

Left
Natural Beauty Med Spa

Medspas – a cross between a medical clinic and day spa – offer services ranging from beauty treatments to medical treatments all under one roof. And Chicago houses some of the best.

When Hallie Rehwaldt glanced in the mirror one morning, she noticed her complexion was riddled with discolorations and uneven texture. "I thought, 'I have to start taking care of my skin, it's crying for attention.'" So she booked a chemical peel to treat her sun damaged skin. That was in 2004 and today she's still a devotee, visiting True Skin Care Center, founded by Steven Dayan, MD, FACS, regularly.

Hallie isn't alone: Out of the 12.1 million cosmetic procedures performed in 2008, 10.4 million were minimally invasive (like laser skin treatments, hair removal, Botox and microdermabrasion). That's up 5 percent from 2007, according to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS).

While these medical-based services, designed to treat skin problems like brown spots, wrinkles, veins and broken capillaries, are available at doctor's offices and even some salons, many patients prefer medspas,* which combine a spa-like atmosphere with current anti-aging technology. Thanks to the income potential of these treatments, medspas have boomed over the last decade.

Clients, who might not be willing to shell out big bucks for surgical procedures or aren't looking for the dramatic change that invasive surgery offers, are – even in the current economy – able to spend a few hundred dollars for a series of peels or dermal fillers to improve the appearance of their skin.

Irvin Wiesman, MD, founder of the new Natural Beauty Med Spa, says more women want to take care of their skin today to avoid the need for more serious procedures in the future. "Women are looking for less invasive and less expensive treatments rather than going right into surgery," he explains.

Even though Tiffani Kim, founder of the Tiffani Kim Institute in River North, says that the demographic of her patients spreads from teens to age 70, "Everyone wants to look younger," she says. "I've always believed that anti-aging starts with healthy skin."

RESULTS MATTER MORE

Another draw is the warm and inviting setting a medspa provides, says Dr. Wiesman. "It's very service-oriented, making sure you're always comfortable and happy," he says. In fact, many have a wellness component – Natural Beauty Med Spa houses a nutrition and personal training center, a massage area and even a permanent makeup artist and hair stylist. Tiffani Kim Institute staffs an internal medicine doctor, a dermatologist, a vascular surgeon and experts in acupuncture and oriental medicine.

Despite the luxurious surroundings, Helene Gelman, owner of 7-year-old SpaDerma in Lincoln Park, says her customers are most concerned with results. "So if there's discomfort or redness after – as there can be after lasers or peels – they're okay with that," she says.

It's frequently the cutting-edge technology that drives customers through the doors, happy to try new services. Dr. Wiesman notes women in Chicago are most concerned with the texture and tone of their skin, and pixel laser treatments – a new technique – are effective in smoothing out wrinkles, roughness and scars. Patients love it, he says, because compared to other resurfacing lasers, it's far less painful and there's virtually no downtime.

CHOOSE WISELY

When selecting a medspa, Tiffani Kim stresses, your number-one concern should be credentials. While having a medical license is required to purchase equipment and prescription-grade skin care products, some medspas may operate with little doctor supervision or fully trained estheticians. "A doctor must be onsite," Tiffani says. "Check out the doctor's reputation, how well they train technicians, and make sure they've never had any accidents," she advises. "These places use lasers and do injections. It's scary to think what could happen if you put yourself in the wrong hands."■

*The definition of a medical spa, says Tiffani Kim, is a facility that operates under the full-time, on-site supervision of a licensed health care professional. The facility operates within the scope of practice of its staff, and offers traditional, complementary and alternative health practices and treatments in a spa-like setting. Practitioners working within a medical spa will be governed by their appropriate licensing board, if licensure is required.