

Saving Face



Cosmetician Gloria Martel shares her secrets to youthful radiance and vitality.

by Dan Carrison



When an attractive woman in her 60s looks for all the world to be in her late 30s, life can be amusing indeed. Younger men admire her, sales clerks suggest fashion styles that shock her generational sensibilities, friends her age suspect that she has made a pact with the devil, and getting her rightful senior discount often requires multiple forms of identification. Doctors yearn to ask *her* for advice, and they finally

do. But for skin care expert and author Gloria Martel, it all comes with the territory.

Gloria has been turning heads and treating faces in Hollywood for nearly three decades. She is an acknowledged authority on looking younger in a community where a great many people want to look their best, and her time is booked for months in advance. Fortunately, this gifted lady, who has by now treated over 2,000 faces, is coming

out with a new book: *Charting Your Face* will empower us to not only understand what our lines and wrinkles are trying to tell us, but also deal with them effectively and even discourage new signs of wear and tear from appearing.

“The face is a map of a person’s emotions, habits, and lifestyle,” Gloria believes. “But the lines are not etched in stone; the map can be changed. And, in fact, most of the lines never had to be there in the first place!” She

should know: her own smooth, youthful complexion is the result of a lifetime of conscientious, disciplined self-care.

An Artist's Appreciation of Faces

Gloria's fascination with reading faces began as a child growing up in the South. "The South offered such a panorama of images," she recalls. "I would see ladies beneath parasols with peaches-and-cream complexions and men whose faces had been seamed by the sun into a permanent squint. But I also saw that my aunts, some of whom actually worked in the cotton fields, had youthful skin, thanks to the enormous hats they wore."

Many of the faces, sadly, were not the happiest. "I grew up in the aftermath of a very turbulent time. Most of my teachers were young women in years but not in expression. They had recently lost loved ones in World War II—brothers, husbands, fiancés—and their suffering showed. They had also lived through four years of rationing, making do without many of the niceties we take for granted. My heart went out to a number of my teachers who were still young but whose faces showed experience beyond their years."

Like an artist, Gloria studied the faces of the adults in her world. But in her mind, she saw images of what could have been, not what was. She felt intuitively that the lines and wrinkles people seemed to accept as an inevitable consequence of aging were not inevitable at all. If habitual muscle use could cause the face to take on a certain aspect, why couldn't habitual muscle use *in the other direction* prevent that look?

"If you watch how someone uses their facial muscles," explains Gloria, "you can see how they create that line or wrinkle. For example, when we peer into the sun, we squint. It creates a frown—a frown that can, over the years, remain whether we are in the sun or not. So rather than bunching up my facial muscles toward the center of my brows, I would consciously pull my muscles out toward my hairline. I thought, *If I'm going to have a habit, it's going to be a good one.*"

Before she was out of high school, Gloria had developed a set of facial exercises that she would continue to perform for life, as well as a burning ambition to be a cosmetician. Her emphasis on exercising the face, revolutionary at the time, may still come as a surprise to even the most health-conscious among us. When we think about working out, we typically think of the large muscle groups of the body, not the tiny muscles of the face. You may not think that the facial muscles even require exercise; after all, they don't exactly do any heavy lifting. Ah, but they do—they lift the skin!



"The muscles of the face support the skin," Gloria elaborates. "Weak or unused muscles let the skin sag, so we have to exercise them daily. After all, we're going to the gym to improve our appearance, but what will people see first as we walk out of the gym? Our well-toned arms and legs or our faces?"

From High School to High Fashion

After graduating from high school, Gloria took a leap of faith and accepted a modeling job in New York City, believing that a stint on the high-fashion runway would be a good credential for a budding cosmetician. Leaving friends and family behind, she was very fortunate to find herself under the tutelage of Jerry Norman, the famous photographer, trainer, and mentor of Lauren Hutton.

"Jerry taught me a lot. He told his models *never* to have anything altered

on their faces that could be contoured with makeup. He insisted that our beauty must come from within and told us to eat well, go to bed early, and to concentrate on our jobs. He was quite the taskmaster, but we all loved him."

But one of Gloria's fellow models, caught up in the social scene of the Big Apple, failed to heed his simple and wise advice. She eventually had plastic surgery to "correct" the bags under her eyes that had resulted from too many late nights of partying when a healthy lifestyle would have refreshed her looks naturally.

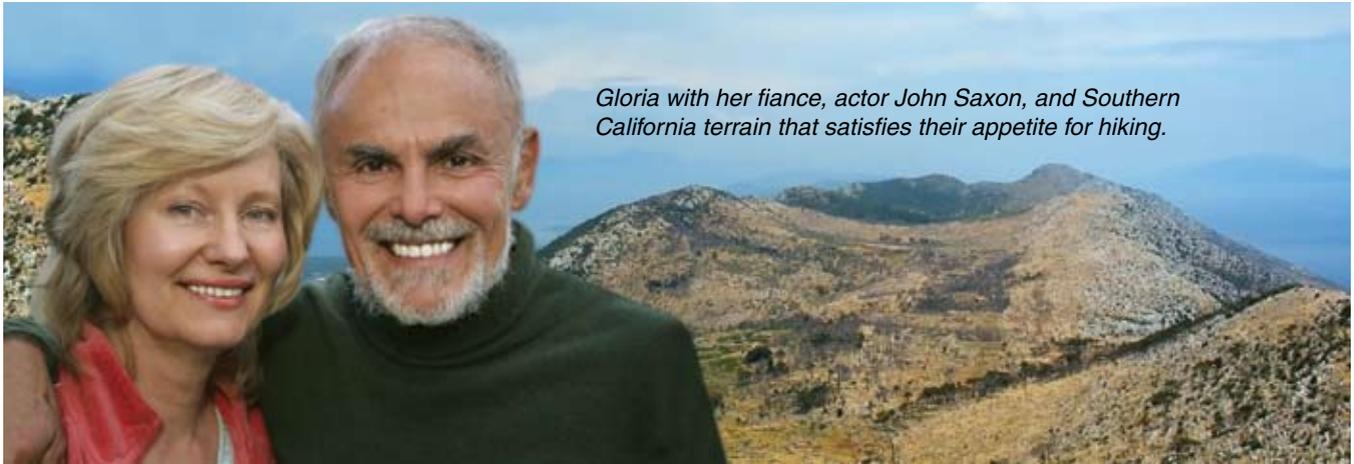
"The sad thing is that when young people have cosmetic surgery, they really don't know yet how their bodies will change because they haven't really grown up. When the changes come, the altered areas often look out of place because the tissue cells can't change with the maturing body."

Hooray for Hollywood

In 1978, after two years of harried dress changes and countless trips up and down the runway, Gloria took another courageous leap and moved to Hollywood to study under famous cosmetician Ida Grey. Before long, she was a facialist to the stars.

One would think that treating the faces of movie stars would generate a powerful word-of-mouth campaign among the rich and famous, but it didn't quite work out that way. "Film stars may be very open about their favorite mechanic or stockbroker, but very few celebrities will ever admit they've been to see a facialist," says Gloria with a wry smile. "They want everyone to believe they're naturally beautiful. But I found that a working girl or housewife would be happy to share her experience with me with her friends, and before I knew it, I was booked up."

To better serve her clients, Gloria invented a simple tool to create resistance for the facial muscles. Called the Pocket Gym, the simple, pliable, pocket-sized device can be used anywhere: at home, on the go, or, as the Hollywood set soon discovered, right before appearing on camera. "You can see the energy radiate from a person's face after just a few short



Gloria with her fiancé, actor John Saxon, and Southern California terrain that satisfies their appetite for hiking.

exercise sets,” explains Gloria. “Fashion models use the Pocket Gym during dress changes; a number of speech therapists recommend it for their clients. I’ll use it during a traffic stop,” she laughs, “and nobody notices a thing.”

Alarmed by the growing number of women choosing either plastic surgery or injections of botulinum toxin to address facial lines and wrinkles, Gloria wrote her first, and now-famous, book, *Grow Young by Discovering the Cause of Each Wrinkle and the 10 Steps to Erase Them*. “In many cases, cosmetic plastic surgery is unnecessary. Proper exercise can lift the skin. In fact, my very first exercise can prevent the lines that people are having toxins injected into!” Gloria says. “I wanted my clients to use the muscle, not paralyze it, because every time you stop the movement of a muscle artificially, something else in the face has to move.”

Shedding Light on Skin Health

In the late '80s, Gloria began reading research about the intriguing effects of red light on healthy skin-cell function. She discovered, for example, that NASA had sponsored research to see whether certain light frequencies could promote healthy skin in astronauts and submariners. Research indicated that specific light spectra might support a natural photobiochemical reaction that seems to stimulate cell proteins to produce more collagen and elastin (Martel 2007).

“I was very excited,” she recalls, “because this seemed like

a perfect adjunct to facial exercise—a two-step treatment to smooth away fine lines and fill in deep wrinkles. So I hired an engineer and we miniaturized the technology.”

Today, thousands of women (and men!) use her handy SkinLift Light for improved skin texture and elasticity. Gloria tells us that many find, to their delight, that with just 15 minutes a day of home treatment, thin, wrinkled skin plumps up and dark spots fade. Puffy eyes, inflammation, and blemishes also seem to react positively to the five light frequencies in her handheld invention.

Don't Forget the Basics!

“But,” she cautions, “there is no silver bullet to beautiful skin. I believe that the facial exercises and the light treatments really help, but we can't ignore the fundamentals of true skin health: a good diet, nutritional supplements, whole-body exercise, and peace of mind. I think it's a shame that people will spend money on treatments and creams then undo any good that has been done with an unhealthy, stressful lifestyle.”

Gloria's own lifestyle is consistent with her theories on optimal skin health. High-quality protein surrounded by fresh, crisp vegetables and fruits can be found



at her table for two every night. She takes herbal supplements to support healthy liver function—so important for beautiful skin—and probiotics for her digestive and immune system; she

even ferments her own vegetables. Gloria eats fish two to three times a week for those enriching omega-3 oils and visits the farmer's market daily for colorful foods rich in antioxidants. For peace of mind, she goes on long walks and practices yoga. One of her favorite exercises is Pilates. Designed originally for dancers, its exercise and stretching routines have kept her legs as youthful as her face.

In fact, one day, as she waited in line at the post office, a masculine voice behind her inquired, “Are you a dancer?” Turning, she found herself face to face with actor John Saxon! The ruggedly handsome screen veteran smiled. “I couldn't help noticing your legs—the muscle tone, that is.”

Blushing, Gloria explained that she was a facialist. Saxon asked for her card. “A few days later, he called,” Gloria says, “but I was so booked up, I couldn't make an appointment for months.”

“Actually,” the warm voice on the other end of the line replied, “I was wondering if you might have dinner with me.”

She happily agreed and hasn't looked back since. Today, Gloria and her fiancé, John Saxon, can be seen at movie premieres, sports venues, and charity events all around Los Angeles. They make a very attractive couple indeed—John, with his rugged good looks, and Gloria, with the face of an angel. **JOL**

References

Martel, G. (2007). “SkinLift Light.” www.gloriamartel.com/skinliftlight.html.