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## Gloria Martel: Hands That Chart a Thousand Faces

By MARY ROURKE

If you don't want a facialist named Gloria Martel to learn your innermost secrets, don't let her touch your face. When her fingers cross your complexion, she's likely to uncover anything.

"A regular client came into the salon with a lot of outbreaks on her cheeks," Martel recalls. "I asked if she'd been eating white flour. It's difficult to digest, and it can cause blemishes."

"At first the woman couldn't remember, but then she figured things out. She'd been having a romance with a man who was feeding her croissants for breakfast."

If you say you want to work on getting rid of wrinkles, Martel might say: "First get rid of them in your mind. Picture your face muscles relaxing, and the lines will smooth out."

Some of her advice relates to more serious matters. "A woman came in with a red, almost burned-looking area near her chin," Martel says. "I suggested she see her gynecologist. It turned out she had a cyst on her left ovary."

She cares for a complexion from the inside out both by conversations with her clients and a self-developed method she calls charting the face.

It's a way of mapping out a person's general health by what she reads on the chin, cheeks or forehead. To her, a blemish along the jawbone can indicate colon problems. A certain type of wrinkle under an eye can signal a malfunctioning kidney. Blemishes under the skin can mean that a person is allergic to sugar. "It's not always oily skin that causes outbreaks, and it's not always old age that causes lines and wrinkles," she says.

Martel is an aesthetician, an herbalist and what she calls a doctor of naturo-

complexion problems with food, herbs and exercise as well as skin-care products.

When she does use products, they are her own custom blends, made of herbs and natural nutrients. "I take away astringents, scrubs, anything that can dehydrate the skin," she says.

And she ignores skin-care trends. "Women come in and tell me they must have products with collagen or elastin. They've read about them in magazine ads. But no matter how much it costs or how much it's advertised, no product will do them any good if it's not right for their skin type."

Whatever the ingredients, Martel says, there is no one skin-care regimen that fills a person's needs for very long. You've got to adjust your routine as your skin changes, and it changes several times a year, she says. "Otherwise it's like taking penicillin to clear up a cold, then continuing to take it for the rest of your life."

As much as she takes a natural approach, she says her goal is to retard the natural aging process. Some of her beauty techniques come from Theodore Bruck, a Switzerland-based medical doctor who specializes in rejuvenation. One is called oxygenation, in which pure oxygen is topically applied. Bruck has used it to help heal bedsores. Martel blends it with placenta and uses it as part of a facial treatment to temporarily soften lines and plump the skin. It takes effect within a few hours. For best results, she says, "use it one day before you need to look great."

Martel's salon, 1551, is at 1551 Westwood Blvd., West Los Angeles. She offers makeup lessons as well as facials, body and face waxing, cellulite wraps and nutritional counseling. Regular facials are \$40 but oxygenation facials are \$60, and products average \$8.50.

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