



Viva la evolution!

2020 was the year we revealed our true (hair) colours and adopted simpler approaches to skincare and make-up.

MELANIE MORRIS reflects on past rituals, and looks ahead to future solutions.

Remember when you were a teenager (or maybe even more recently!) and would arrive home, delighted, with a haul of fast fashion and other cheap bits and pieces? A family elder would always sigh and suggest you invest the same amount of money in “something good quality that will last”. Well, I’m about to do the same, only in the beauty arena.

It’s not so long ago that we were all about Friday night. About pre-drinks, get-readies, and big, celebratory days and nights out. About grand-scale weddings, festivals, mini-breaks and holidays. And all of these events required their own beauty rituals and requirements, from glitter partings to Mediterranean tans. And we thought nothing of ten-step skincare routines... Sure, don’t the Koreans do 16?

Since our world turned upside down in March of this year, there’s been not so much a revolution, but an evolution in beauty

– not just in the way we wear our hair and make-up and the treatments we value, but also in our intolerance for complication. Equally, we’re beginning to put emphasis on things we never thought of before. Gone is the trend, for example, of big, pillowy lips (who cares, when they are under a mask?). Instead, we’re looking in a different direction.

The world of Zoom, Hangouts and Teams has brought new aesthetic demands to the fore. I had never noticed the slant of my two front teeth before appearing in the virtual world – the way light refracts off them is cruel and forced me into the dentist for consultancy on the best solution. Others have found “turkey neck” and jawline definition a more amplified problem; for others, it’s the quest for clear, spot-free skin (and yes, masks aren’t helping that situation).

In the days of the “old normal”, many women were happy to invest in beauty procedures and treatments with short lifespans – think hyaluronic injections, spray tans and temporary face lift facials; Cinderella-style quick fixes. It doesn’t seem worthwhile now. Would we actually get value for them, when socialising is so sparse? And truthfully, there are filters for everything else.

That’s not to say we aren’t in favour of a little aesthetic help. Plenty of opportunistic people used lockdown as a great time for surgical intervention, but in terms of “maintenance”, perhaps the smarter move right now is to look at treatments which might cost more, but will deliver longer-lasting results, and better bang for your buck.

FACE

Ultherapy (from about €1,500 at skin clinics nationwide) is the gold-standard non-surgical skin tightener, but it's not without pain (to pocket, and face). The treatment uses ultrasound radio frequency to lift and firm the neck, jaw and facial features, slowly taking effect over three months until one day you'll look at a photo and see a profound difference has occurred. I like Dr Rosemary Coleman's Blackrock Clinic practice for this treatment, as they offer client sedation, which means the nurse can dial up the frequency for best results with minimal discomfort.