

W O R T H E V E R Y C E N T

Investment beauty, like investment dressing, is all about the amortization. By Emily Listfield

SAVVY WOMEN in New York, Los Angeles, and Paris wait up to six months to have their brows perfected by Dominique Bossavy. Her semipermanent technique clocks in at around \$4,500, but that does little to deter those obsessed with her trademark “born this way” results. Big-bucks brows are just part of a wave of expensive treatments that offer long-lasting solutions. Though they may seem pricey at first, when you factor in the time and money saved on maintenance, along with the undeniable confidence boost of a beauty problem solved, acolytes maintain that the price of entry makes sense.

PERFECT BROWS Bossavy built up her lengthy wait list through word of mouth. Her signature NanoColor Infusion technique involves painting in brows with thousands of individual brushstrokes, using a fine needle that deposits pigment just below the skin’s surface. “Your best brows will instantly give you a lifted and refreshed look,” she says. The process takes three one-hour sessions so that Bossavy can observe how your skin reacts to pigment (better safe than faux). Results fade gradually over two to three years. While that other semipermanent brow technique, microblading, is having a moment, and is less expensive, Bossavy insists her approach is safer and more natural-looking: “With microblading, needles are configured into a comb that’s pulled across the brow. It tears skin, which is very traumatic and can deposit too much color. I make tiny individual insertions, so there is little to no risk of infection. The results are softer and more predictable.” (Needless to say, micro mavens beg to differ.) Be warned, though, for the first few days, brows appear darker as the color settles in, and you must avoid any contact with water and direct sunlight. Need justification for the Birkin bag of brows? Monthly waxing and tinting appointments over the same period could add up to more than \$2,700.

SMOOTH, HAIRLESS SKIN For those looking to go hair-free, laser hair removal saves time, money—and stubble. “The new lasers are more powerful, less painful, and get better results,” says Chris Karavolas, owner of Romeo & Juliette Laser Hair Removal in New York. Unlike electrolysis, which targets one hair follicle at a time, a laser can zap up to 200 hairs in half

a second. Each hair absorbs the laser light, which in turn damages the hair follicle, inhibiting growth. It’s not for everyone, however. “The laser will not travel through hair that has no pigment, such as white, light blonde, or light red hair,” Karavolas explains. For those with paler skin, he recommends an Alexandrite laser; for darker skin, he prefers a Nd:YAG laser. The biggest risk is hypo- or hyperpigmentation if the wrong laser is used, so make sure you’re going to a professional with extensive experience. Treating legs takes about 45 minutes, and while you will leave hair-free after the first session, plan on four to six treatments spaced six weeks apart for permanent results. Legs can cost up to \$700 per session; underarms and bikini are \$200 each. Considering that a leg and bikini wax can run \$150 a month, the beauty math is in the laser’s favor.

THE FAT ERASER CoolSculpting, a fat-freezing procedure, can take inches off your waist, thighs, back, and chin, with none of the downtime or risks associated with liposuction. “Results are permanent, there’s no anesthesia, and you walk out the door with no restrictions,” says New York cosmetic dermatologist **Robert Anolik, M.D.** While CoolSculpting can reduce up to 25 percent of fat in a single area, it’s not a weight-loss treatment and is best for people who are relatively slender but have stubborn pockets of fat that don’t respond to diet or exercise. “The procedure uses a vacuum device to suck extra inches in between cooling plates that freeze fat cells without harming surrounding tissue,” **Anolik** explains. “The cells die and are gradually eliminated from your body.” Each session lasts 35 to 60 minutes and, beyond some chilliness, is pain-free, though there may be bruising and swelling. Two to three treatments are needed, and while full results can take three months, improvement can be seen after three weeks. Treatments range from \$600 to \$1,400 per session, depending on the size of the area (liposuction can cost \$3,500 or more). “For women who want to go sleeveless or who are covering up and self-conscious about a double chin, it’s an amazing boost to self-esteem,” says Amy Wechsler, M.D., a New York dermatologist. “And it’s gradual, so no one will know you had it done. It’s hard to put a price tag on all of that.” ■

BEAUTY BAZAAR Chanel Rouge Coco Gloss in Chilli is a smart buy—it delivers the shiniest red (\$30).

Photograph by Kenneth Willardt