

SUN WORSHIPPER

One woman reverses the sun damage from her vacationing ways.

BY MARISSA STAPLEY-PONIKOWSKI



Hindsight really is 20/20, and it wasn't until Marsha Hancock experienced early menopause and began aging rapidly that the avid traveller realized the true detriment of her sun-worshipping ways. "My skin became dry, and then I could really see the sun damage," she says. With a mix of Scottish and Irish ancestry, blue-green eyes, red hair, fair skin and freckles, Hancock admits her face burns easily – even from cold or wind. "In spite of that I've never been one to take good care of my skin. Most of my life, I've gone to bed with my makeup on and I seldom wear sunscreen."

Lucky for Hancock, who loves travelling to warmer climes, a lifetime of solar indulging didn't have to mean a permanent bad-skin sentence. In 2006 she came across an issue of *Elevate* while having her hair styled. "After I left the salon, I couldn't stop thinking about all the different procedures I had just read about. When I got home, I looked at my saggy, sun-spotted face in the mirror and decided it was time to do something about it."

Armed with her newfound enhancement information, Hancock began investigating the various options available. She quickly decided Dr. Tim Sproule, MD FRCSC, a plastic surgeon based in Toronto, was the man to save her skin. "I checked him out with the College of Physicians and Surgeons. I then researched his website and was impressed with his credentials. It was interesting to me that for many years he has been travelling to developing nations to donate his surgical skills to trauma cases, children with congenital birth defects and burn victims." Hancock made arrangements to consult with Dr. Sproule and arrived at his Scarborough office full of questions about the various treatments she had read about.

"Dr. Sproule listened to my concerns and suggested I try Cutera's 3D Skin Rejuvenation," says Hancock. The three-laser program tightens skin and eliminates fine lines, wrinkles and lax skin. It addresses problems such as redness, freckles and sun spots and also shrinks pores and stimulates the production of new collagen. The skin continues to rejuvenate after the treatments are complete. "Dr. Sproule advised me that the laser treatments are relatively painless with virtually no side-effects. There is no need for anesthetic, incisions or sutures and no bruising. I couldn't wait to get started."

According to Dr. Sproule, the 3D Skin Rejuvenation package can be tailored to meet the needs of each patient. "You can have a single treatment or choose a package where you use the best of all three together to achieve what they call 3D rejuvenation. Each laser affects different layers of the skin. It's very sophisticated and quite fascinating. And we're able to customize treatments for each patient because the lasers are gentle enough to do tests on the skin to see what's going to happen."

Packages start at \$2,380, and Dr. Sproule says that although results vary according to each patient's skin type and level of damage, a typical course consists of three to six Laser Genesis treatments, two to four Titan treatments and three to six LimeLight treatments. The Laser Genesis softens fine lines and

wrinkles, decreases the look of pores and eliminates redness. It has also been proven to stimulate collagen growth. The Titan uses infrared light to heat lower layers of skin tissue and stimulate collagen growth. The LimeLight, which is the only component of the 3D set that causes slight discomfort, is a pulsed light treatment that offers total retexturing and skin rejuvenation. The treatments are done over the course of several months and take approximately one hour each. "I didn't enjoy the LimeLight as much as I enjoyed the other two, but I was able to stand the discomfort. It's almost like when you feel the sting it's going away already. I took a Tylenol before I went and that seemed to help," says Hancock.

"We live in a day and age of miracles. We can do these amazing things that can really transform people, and Marsha is no exception," says Dr. Sproule. "I'm very impressed with how effective this course of treatment has been for her. She has had a really significant improvement in the texture and vibrancy of her skin, which is hard to achieve with most other modalities."

"People complimented me on the way I looked, which made me happy."

Because Hancock was so eager to get started on her course of treatment, she was impatient to see results. "At first I was a little antsy. When Sharon Edgley, the clinic manager at Evolution Laser, said it was best to wait a month between each session, I could feel myself getting impatient. But, truth be told, after I did the first treatment I could see change happening in the month leading up to the next one. And it was good because it wasn't so much an immediate change that would make people think I had something done. People thought I'd lost weight and complimented me on the way I looked, which made me happy."

Hancock just returned from a trip to Aruba, where she followed Dr. Sproule's post-treatment advice to the letter. "Now I enjoy taking care of my skin. I wash my face every morning and night and put on the Biodroga lotion I bought from Dr. Sproule's office. I also wear SPF 50 sunscreen religiously. It has just become part of my makeup routine, and even when I wear it, I still get a little colour on my face." But she has vowed never to burn again because it's just not worth it. "The treatments have made a big difference in my life because I can see so much change in my skin. When I look back at pictures taken in 2006 and then see pictures taken now I think, Oh, wow, what a change! I'd like to keep it that way."

According to Dr. Sproule, if Hancock continues to take good care of her skin – including engaging in rigorous sun protection – she should enjoy the results of the 3D Rejuvenation treatments for a lifetime. "I believe a permanent change occurs in the skin and, although you will continue to age naturally, you will always see a difference." **e**

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