



## Med-spa Magic

THE DOCTOR—OR AROMATHERAPIST—IS IN.

“Welcome,” breathes the concierge in a chic black tunic. “The doctor has prescribed an IPL (Intense Pulse Light) treatment today, and we have you down for a rose-petal bath. How is that pain in your lower back? Would you prefer a regular or a French manicure?”

What’s going on here? The reception area feels like the lobby of an expensive boutique hotel. The candle-lit treatment rooms have heated mattresses and down comforters. Celtic chants emanate from hidden speakers, and there’s not a hint of alcohol or camphor in the air. Is this a doctor’s office or a spa? The answer is yes, and it’s a white-hot segment of the spa industry.

Med-spas are bridging the gap between the clinical and the nurturing side of health. Instead of seeking medical attention after symptoms appear, people are practicing prevention—not just at the health-food store but also at the spa. And instead of sending post-operative patients home to heal on their own, doctors are providing follow-up care in spa environments.

Cosmetic and reconstructive surgeon Manuel Peña, M.D., of Naples, was the first out of the box in Collier County with the med-spa concept when he created **La Piel Spa** for pre- and post-surgical skin care in 1989. Five years ago it expanded into a full-service spa, with a separate entrance and staff. Besides traditional salon and massage services, the menu includes the treat-

ment of acne and other skin conditions, chemical peels, body wraps and cellulite treatments. Dr. Peña’s patients also receive gift certificates for pre- and post-surgery spa services, including a makeup consultation for facelift patients to complement their new looks.

Among the benefits of a med-spa, says Dr. Peña, is that the chemicals and acids in certain products, such as peels, are available in varying concentrations. Consumers can use home products at a low level, the traditional spa might use a higher concentration, and a physician-directed facility may use the highest, or prescription-level concentration.

Still, there’s no rule against decadence in a med-spa, as evidenced by **La Piel’s** recent Mother’s Day package: the Champagne and Roses Butter Cream Scrub, enriched with shea butter and packed with vitamins A, C, D and E.

Some resort spas, such as **The Spa at Naples Bay Resort**,



Dr. Manuel Peña