

BARE NECESSITIES

Incorporate the latest hair-removal trends and methods in your spa, and watch your bottom line grow.

BY NICOLE ALTAVILLA

HAIR REMOVAL HAS COME A LONG WAY SINCE CAVEMEN USED TWEEZERS

made from seashells and the ancient Romans used razors made from flints to rid the body of unwanted hair. While hair-removal methods have certainly evolved since then, the idea has basically remained the same. However, even with advancements and modern technology, there is still room for improvement when it comes to hair removal. Although most are suitable for all skin types, some methods continue to be painful, expensive, and even dangerous to some. But that doesn't stop spa-goers from taking the "no pain, no gain" approach (think: a Brazilian wax) in order to achieve that highly desired smooth look. "Hair removal continues to be popular because smooth, hair-free skin looks and feels amazing and healthy," says Rachel Couvrey, brand manager at GiGi Wax. "There is a glow and sheen that is difficult to achieve otherwise." ●

choose wisely

Because there are many hair-removal methods available today, it's important for spa-goers and spa professionals to discuss the various methods and weigh the pros and cons of each to choose the best option. "Just like fashion, hair-removal trends come and go, so what is in style now may not be 10 years from now, like the over-tweezed brows of the '90s," says GiGi Wax's Rachel Couvrey. "Similarly, a full Brazilian may not be your



ideal aesthetic in your 60s, so permanent hair-removal methods, such as laser or electrolysis, might not be the best choice." Ultimately, a consultation is needed prior to performing any hair-removal service, as it ensures the safest and most effective method is chosen. Here's a breakdown of the hair-removal options available today:

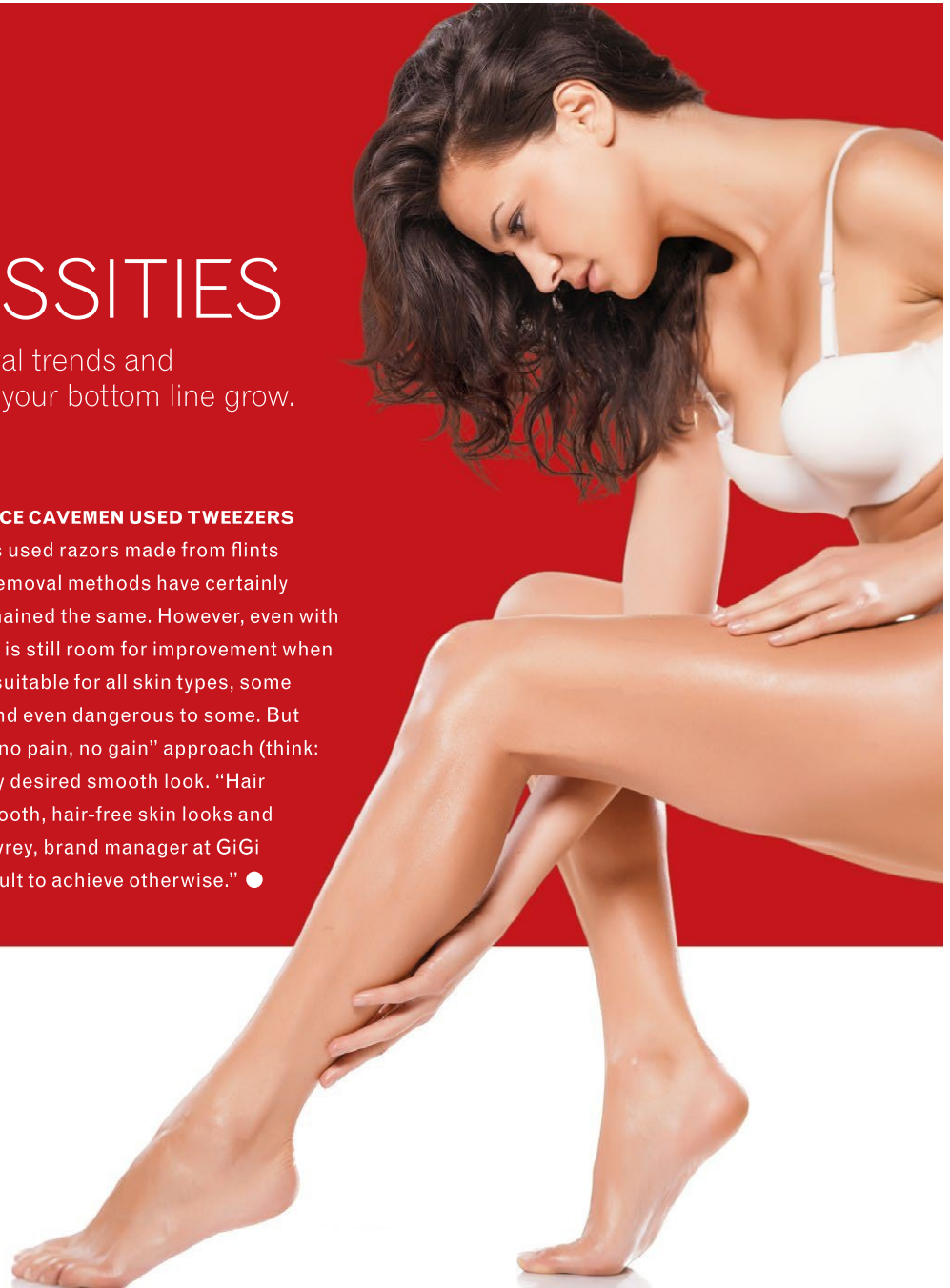
WAXING

The most popular hair-removal method, waxing involves removing the entire hair follicle from the root by applying heated wax (soft or hard) to the skin where there is unwanted hair.

Pros: This method can be performed on most areas of the body and is generally considered a safe, effective, and attainable option. Because it removes the hair from the root, results from waxing often last longer than other temporary hair-removal methods. Plus, it is highly effective in removing short and stubborn hairs, and after a few waxes (and no shaving or tweezing in between), hair begins to grow in softer, finer, and sparser.

Cons: Waxing can sometimes break the hair off, preventing the hair from being completely removed, and some wax can

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stick to the skin and cause stinging when removed. Also, hair needs to be grown out to about a half inch in length before receiving the service.

TWEEZING

This method uses tweezers to remove each individual hair.

Pros: Tweezing is useful for shaping eyebrows and removing stray hairs on the face and body.

Cons: Besides being a slow and painful option, tweezing can break the hair instead of pulling it out, which can cause thicker regrowth. Also, there's a risk of infection if the tweezers are not properly sterilized.

THREADING

A thin cotton or polyester thread is doubled, twisted, and then rolled over areas of unwanted hair.

Pros: While mostly performed on the eyebrows, this method can also be used on the face, neck, and toes. It is considered a faster option than tweezing because it removes several hairs at a time, but its discomfort level is similar.

Cons: According to Lindsay Miller, president of Lycon Precision Waxing USA, threading is not recommended for acneic skin, because the twisting of the thread can cause the acne to rupture. Also, hairs are sometimes cut at the skin's surface rather than pulled from the root, which can cause them to grow back faster.

LASER HAIR REMOVAL

This method uses a laser to damage the hair follicle, which inhibits future growth.

Pros: Ideal for clients with light skintones and dark hair, laser hair removal is an effective option, as most clients will have permanent hair loss at the site of the treatment after three to seven sessions.

During the series, most hair begins to grow back softer and sparser before not growing back at all. However, if there is any regrowth, it can be treated every six to 12 months. What's more, today's lasers utilize smarter technology than the lasers of the past and are better able to protect the skin from damage with the help of cooling devices on the lasers, according to Kally Papantoniou, M.D., cosmetic dermatologist at Advanced Dermatology PC (multiple locations in New York). "Cooling of the skin while delivering laser energy prevents thermal injury and greatly reduces the risk of post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation or burns," she says.

Cons: This option is time-consuming and expensive, and it requires repeat visits for the best results. According to Lycon Precision Waxing's Lindsay Miller, clients who opt for this method must avoid the sun for six weeks before and after treatment because exposure to the sun lessens the effectiveness of the treatment and increases the risk of complications. Also, results depend

soothing
STARS

One of the biggest telltale signs that someone just received a hair-removal service is red and inflamed skin. While this irritation often clears up within minutes or hours, there are several ingredients that can be extra soothing on this sensitive skin post-hair removal. After-care products that contain soothing ingredients can help calm skin, reduce redness, and prevent ingrown hairs. "It's also important to use an antibacterial antiseptic after hair removal, because when you remove the entire hair, the empty hair follicle can become irritated or infected," says Normajeane Fusco, president and owner of Equibal, makers of Finipil, a patented, FDA-registered antiseptic that destroys 99.999 percent of bacteria and protects skin by keeping the empty hair follicle clean, killing germs, and helping to prevent ingrown hairs. Here's a look at some of the most soothing ingredients for use after hair-removal services:

- Aloe
- Arnica
- Azulene
- Chamomile
- Jojoba Oil
- Lavender
- Tea Tree Oil
- Vitamin C
- Vitamin E
- Witch Hazel ●

on a number of factors such as hair growth, color, and texture. According to Advanced Dermatology PC's Kally Papantoniou, there are wavelengths used today that are more specific for different skin types, even darker skin (lasers with longer wavelengths are used to work deeper in the skin), but laser hair removal is not recommended for clients with white and blonde hair. "All hair lasers work by targeting pigment, so if pigment is absent the laser will be ineffective," she says.

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ELECTROLYSIS

Electrolysis involves the use of a device containing a very fine needle or probe that is inserted directly into the follicle on the face or body to destroy the growth center of the hair with heat energy.

Pros: This method is effective at removing hair for long periods of time (even permanently) and is still the only way to permanently remove white and very blonde hairs. "Electrolysis, like laser hair removal, still requires multiple treatments, but it is a great option for hair removal for those with light hairs," says Advanced Dermatology PC's Kally Papantoniou.

Cons: It is time-consuming, costly, and there's the potential for skin discoloration if not performed properly.

SUGARING

This ancient Egyptian method of hair removal involves the use of a sugar paste or gel made from ingredients like water, sugar, and lemon juice applied to the skin and then removed in a flicking motion, pulling the hair out from the follicle.



Pros: Sugaring is an all-natural hair removal technique that gently exfoliates skin and eliminates and prevents ingrown hairs. It does not require the use of any sticks or strips, so there is no risk of cross-contamination, and it's easy to clean up (a warm towel will remove any residue). "It's water soluble, so it will not adhere to live skin cells, it removes the hair by the root leaving no breakage and longer-lasting results, and it contains no fragrances or dyes, which are the number-one skin irritants in products," says Lisa Hines, owner of **Sugar Hill Spa** (Austin, TX).

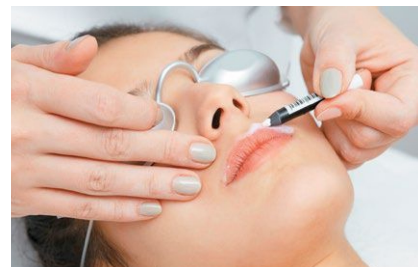
Cons: This method is time-consuming, and, if performed improperly, it can irritate the skin, causing redness and bumps. It's also harsh and strenuous on a therapist's wrists, back, and body, according to Lilliane Caron, founder and director of Waxxxpress.

DERMAPLANING

Similar to shaving, this form of manual exfoliation gently removes the top layer of dead skin and fine, thin "peach-fuzz."

Pros: This method leaves skin with a softer, smoother, and younger appearance.

Cons: Dermaplaning is not recommended for clients with sensitive or acneic skin, and there is a risk of getting cut during the service. ●



what's NEW

Although waxing has been around for many years, the waxes themselves have evolved into different types and textures that make them more suitable for various types of skin and hair. Leona Baisley, esthetician and educator for Amber Products, has noticed more companies creating a hard wax that is formed into beads, which is great for quickly melting and refilling wax in between clients. In addition, GiGi Wax's Rachel Couvrey is seeing waxes with more hybrid and cellophane styles. "Hybrid waxes remain soft and pliable on the skin but don't require cloth or muslin strips," she says. "They infuse more oil into the formulations so they are easier to work with and remove. They never turn hard or brittle on the skin. We are also seeing lots of hair removal for the full face. Women are no longer afraid they will grow a thick beard if they shave or wax their face, instead they are noticing how much smoother and clearer their skin looks."

Services like bikini-area facials (sometimes called Vajacials) are among some of the newer treatments that help soothe skin post-hair removal. At **Haven** (New York City), clients can opt for the Peach Smoothie (\$55, 15 minutes), which clears the bikini area of ingrown hairs and gently cleanses the area with an exfoliating scrub and an acid peel. Also, the Vajazzle service continues to attract clients. **Skin Beauty Bar** (Washington, D.C.), for example, offers the Vajazzle (\$15), which involves pre-shaped designed crystals applied to the bikini area, and the Bikini Glamour (\$15) service, which involves the application of glitter designs.

Similar to the increase in lash and brow bars that are opening up nationwide, wax bars are also popping up. Says Lindsay Miller of Lycon Precision Waxing USA, "Customer attitudes are changing with waxing being more of a to-do list item, which means they do not want to spend an hour out of their day at a spa appointment and instead want a quick, efficient service at a reasonable price." ●

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