

BEAUTY EXPLORER

WE TRIED IT!

The Transformer

A PROFESSIONAL AESTHETICIAN—
OF A CERTAIN AGE—PURSUES HER
FIRST COSMETIC PROCEDURE.

By Arika Casebolt

➔➔ Some aspects of growing older are awesome. You know yourself and understand others better; you're better equipped to handle life's challenges. The physical effects of aging are less desirable. The ravages of time and misspent youth (and misspent, er, not-so-youth), of sun and environmental damage, all have consequences, and before you know it, you're looking in the mirror at a version of yourself you no longer recognize. Now as an aesthetician, I am focused on epidermal health and beauty, but until recently I've been utterly resistant to cosmetic procedures. Then I met Dr. Michele Shermak.

THE PROCESS: Dr. Shermak's spare, comfortable Lutherville practice is calm and quiet, and her smooth-skinned (yet not at all fake or frozen-looking) staff immediately puts my nervous self at ease with their vibe. After filling out the requisite forms for new patients, I wait only a few minutes before pretty Dr. S. glides in and invites me back to a pristine treatment

room. I tell her of my initial resistance to cosmetic procedures, and she answers all of my questions with such graciousness that, within moments, I'm putty in her skillful hands. "I'm interested in injectable fillers," I spit out. "I've been reading about them and love the results on some of my clients and friends." She hands me a mirror and suggests Restylane for my "tear troughs," the dark hollows beneath my eyes, and Juvederm Ultra for the fine lines and grooves around my lips. She addresses the corners of my mouth, too, which tend to turn down. After Shermak uses a topical numbing agent, she goes to work.

THE RESULT: There is virtually no pain at all, just some mild stinging. Within 15 minutes or so, she's all done. She shows me my reflection again, and I am dumbfounded at the changes. I still see myself, but a much fresher, smoother version of me. My light bruises are almost gone in 48 hours. And, honestly, my only regret is not finding Dr. Shermak sooner. □



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