

ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES

go mainstream

Beauty editor Kelsey Ferencak discovers why 'woo-woo' skin and body treatments are having a moment



A few weeks ago, my massage therapist made me cry – and it wasn't from the pressure. Why, you may ask? Let me take you back to the beginning.

The crying took place at Sydney salon Venustus. I had decided to venture a little out of my comfort zone and delve into the world of alternative therapy. As a beauty editor, I've had my fair share of massages – remedial, shiatsu, hot-rock... you name it, I've done it. But this was like nothing I'd ever experienced.

My session began with a one-on-one with owner and healer Jeannie Bourke, where we discussed my emotions, my day-to-day life and what energies I wanted to shift and, conversely, attract. Then we set intentions for the treatment.

I then selected three crystals from the vast array of mystical rocks Jeannie had in her salon. I know it sounds woo-woo, but stay with me – Jeannie and her team use these consultations to personalise your treatment based on your emotional energy.

I had the Om massage, a 90-minute treatment that involved a combination of



1. FACE DETOX TREATMENT (\$320 for 90 minutes, herbario.com.au)

2. OM MASSAGE (\$299 for 90 minutes, venustus.com.au)



alternative therapies, including crystals, Tibetan chanting, singing bowls to relieve stress, a palo santo (holy wood) burning prayer and a combination of massage techniques such as hot-rock, shiatsu and reflexology.

To be honest, I still don't really understand the whole treatment myself, but when I walked out of the room, I cried – a good, tension-releasing cry. Sometimes we all need a good cry and Jeannie reassured me it was completely normal as my energy had shifted and I'd opened myself up spiritually and emotionally.

The more treatments and guidance you receive, the better your results – think of it as modern-day counselling with a side of physical bliss.

The alternative treatment worked so well for my body and mind, I decided I'd try it for my face. Melbourne skin therapist and director of Herbario salon Valli Shubere was recommended to me by a colleague for her 'life-changing facials'.

Her technique is all about using herbal ingredients, nutritional therapies and intense massage techniques to give your face a workout. It was developed to detoxify

skin and reverse the visible signs of ageing.

The majority of the 90-minute facial was spent with Valli vigorously pulling, tugging and sculpting my face with a grainy exfoliant, which sounds painful but was surprisingly enjoyable. She started by adjusting my jaw to release the tension caused by clenching, then made her way up to my forehead, working to wake up my lymphatic system to drain fluid and congestion.

To finish, a healing mask was applied to my face, along with an anti-inflammatory on my neck and shoulders, then I was wrapped in plastic and hot towels, and told to relax for 20 minutes. When I was woken and unwrapped, it looked like I'd had a cosmetic procedure – my skin was sculpted, contoured and plump. All thanks to Valli's magic hands.

So if a good, old-fashioned massage or facial doesn't cut it for you anymore and you want a different treatment that gives you powerful results – with a hefty side of stress-relief – then an alternative remedy may be for you. They're not cheap, but even a couple of sessions a year should do the trick.

GOOD FOR YOUR GUT

My #thisyearwill promise was to improve my gut health. Two months in, I've tried pretty much every supplement, popped every pill and sipped every bone broth on the market. And when it comes to an easy drink-at-your-desk powder, I've got these on rotation...

THE BEAUTY CHEF CLEANSE INNER BEAUTY POWDER (\$65, thebeautychef.com)

A blend of bio-fermented fruit, vegetables, seeds and herbs work to get your digestive enzymes up and running, and help bring your belly back to balance. **TASTES LIKE** a strong wheatgrass shot.



BEAR NOURISH (\$45, bearltd.com)

Made solely from Aussie Lady Finger bananas, this powder acts as a prebiotic multi-fibre supplement that helps to increase probiotic cultures in your gut. **TASTES LIKE** a protein shake.



WELLECO SUPER ELIXIR GREENS (\$145, welleco.com.au)

If it's good enough for Elle Macpherson, it's good enough for you! This green tonic focuses on alkalising your body to get your pH levels balanced for improved digestion. **TASTES LIKE** a very green smoothie.



#TRENDING

PEAK PROTECTION

HALO BY DERMAL HUB (\$249, dermalhub.com.au)

This trendy visor sounds expensive, but it's the epitome of functional fashion. The tinted, UV-400 protective lens shields three-quarters of your face – so is more protective than your regular hat – and protects against both UVA and UVB rays.

