



C beauty

Skin Savior

With new national retailers, treatment rooms and spa lines, skincare visionary **Kate Somerville** goes for the glow BY NORA ZELEVANSKY

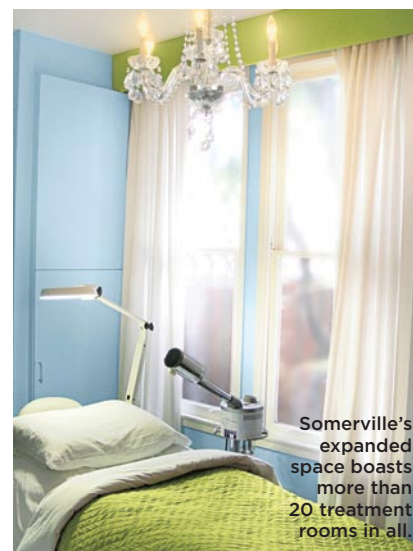
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hen you're flanked by Marc Jacobs and Oscar de la Renta, you know you've officially arrived—at **Kate Somerville**, that is. L.A.'s lauded skincare maven pioneered Melrose Place back in 2004, when, with the exception of John Frieda salon, the quaint tree-lined street's myriad antique shops were anything but abuzz (more like asleep). In those days, three treatment rooms, a nurse practitioner and two estheticians (known here as "Skin Health Experts") sufficed at Kate Somerville. But that was a long time ago.

Now, after a major expansion, a crisp reception area glows with semi-distressed silver upholstered chairs, sea green and aqua accents, an imposing orchid and tiered sterling trays arrayed with cookies and fruit. Formerly Johnny Depp's studio, the med-spa now rambles into bungalow-style suites and up a grand staircase to the clinic's newest addition, which Somerville and team refer to as The White Room.

Upon completion of this fresh space, the clinic will have grown to more than 20 treatment rooms. Somerville's beloved product line—launched less than two years ago—has spurred partnerships with swanky hotel brands from St. Regis to Four Seasons and department store powerhouses Neiman Marcus and Henri Bendel.

Today, in a new White Room-adjacent upstairs office, Somerville—tossing her wild brown curls—chats about



Somerville's expanded space boasts more than 20 treatment rooms in all.



Officially, I pose the day's most delicate question: "I have a cystic pimple emerging on my chin. What do I do?" Instead of laughing, Somerville studies my skin intently, begins concocting strategies and warns against cortisone injections as they wreak long-term havoc.

Clearly, the visionary esthetician's true love is skincare—though pioneering eyelash-extensions garnered her big notoriety when Paris Hilton, a loyal client, noticed Somerville's lush lashes, requested the service and then batted her own all over town. She won't name names, but tabloids and beauty rags alike have snapped countless A-list devotees from Jessica Alba to Kate Walsh emerging from the clinic. Actually, through simple word of mouth, a who's who of celebrities has been secured for the exclusive pre-opening party.

Somerville herself is warm and grounded (and, although she's a "guinea pig" for every service the clinic provides, doesn't appear to be caught in a Botox-induced wind tunnel like many beauty world counterparts). No stranger to the school of hard knocks, Somerville (or "Katie" to close friends) grew up in meager circumstance near Fresno with her high-school-football-coach father in a converted barn. "My father supported a competitive spirit, which really made me a leader," she explains. "I apply

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"THIS IS PROGRESSIVE AMERICAN SKINCARE, WHERE ACCESSIBILITY AND LUXURY MEET SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WITH REAL RESULTS."

Melrose Place's "very European" vibe with me and Tracy O'Connor, vice president of communications and a loyalist since Somerville fixed her damaged skin five years ago.

