



SKIN TRAINING

Entrust your wedding-day complexion to beauty boot camp.

By Nora Zelevansky

about face At her Melrose Place clinic, home of the celebrity-frequented White Room (above), paramedical aesthetician Kate Somerville (right) serves up a Bridal Boot Camp treatment program for ideal wedding-day skin.



Here comes the bride: scooting around the corner onto tree-lined Melrose Place, past tantalizing (rehearsal dinner?) dresses at Marc Jacobs, and up a grand staircase into the new V.I.P. White Room reception area at Kate Somerville Skin Health Experts, where even the white-on-white patterned wallpaper pleases and sparkles. Once plied with the city's tastiest orange-, cucumber-, and lemon-infused spa water, our betrothed is tucked under yummy treatment-room blankets and is dressed in white—a white terrycloth wrap for her facial, that is.

Fairy tale brides may be lucky enough to blush and glow effortlessly on their wedding day, but in reality, nuptial planning is a surefire recipe for skin disaster. Take a cup of stress, a pinch of insomnia, one bad dress fitting, an ounce of familial pressure, and voilà—you have the complexion of a dried apricot.

Fortunately, aesthetic genius Kate Somerville knew from the moment she opened her sweet but no fluff med-spa in 2004 that simply hoping for a perfect wedding day complexion is insufficient—as insufficient as trying to quick-fix skin issues with a single treatment the week beforehand. “You can’t build Rome in a day,” Somerville says. “Brides start prepping six or, in some cases, even eight months prior, so we can make sure there are no pimples and skin is freshened and brightened. Skin cells take time to turn over.”

BRIDAL BEAUTY



holistic handling In addition to clinical treatments, Somerville's programs emphasize protection from environmental damage and a skin-nourishing diet.

BOOT CAMP FOR BRIDAL SKIN

Since opening her medi-spa, Somerville has been developing her now full-fledged Bridal Boot Camp treatment program for ideal wedding-day skin, along with an entire skin product line and, most recently, her new Body By Kate services. Of course, Somerville's lauded clinic (a best-kept secret not too long ago) has always been celebrity central, catering to A-list brides like Kate Walsh and Nicole Richie long before a specific bridal regimen was in place.

Still, Somerville came by her growing empire honestly and understands that varying budgets—and skin types, for that matter—require different consideration. So, each bridal program is tailored to suit individual needs and means. “Everybody reacts to treatments differently,” Somerville says. “Luckily, we’re one of the most highly technical clinics in the world.”

BEAUTY AT ANY AGE

Happily ensconced in her second marriage, Somerville emphasizes that not all brides are 22

years old these days. Ideally, more mature brides should start their skin program well in advance of their wedding because fighting wrinkles can be tricky. Starting with regular facials six months out is generally optimal for any client, but people with more serious scarring or age lines should begin sooner. If the sky is the limit, Somerville sings the praises of a Titan nonsurgical facelift (with no downtime) and a new laser treatment called The Pearl that microscopically resurfaces and tightens the skin, shrinking larger pores and treating sun damage (which is an all-out epidemic in L.A.) with only five days of downtime.

As for injections, Somerville—who spent her early days working in concert with major plastic surgeons—suggests sparing application. “Of course, a little bit of injecting is a good thing,” she says. “I use three different varieties for separate parts of the face: Juviderm for the nasal labial folds, CosmoDerm for fine lines, and CosmoPlast to build up lip buds. We make it really natural, so you don’t look like a duck on your wedding day.”

During the week of the big event, Laser Genesis (like a heated pen scribbling on the skin) is recommended to improve skin’s texture, while a signature DermalQuench facial with oxygen and hyaluronic acid

DOS AND DON'TS FOR SMOOTH SKIN

While Kate Somerville's Bridal Boot Camp is ideal, some skin care missions can be carried out at home. Below, Somerville offers three invaluable tips to live by in the weeks before the wedding:

1. When in doubt, exfoliate and hydrate.

Use a product with hyaluronic acid to plump and revitalize skin. Exfoliate to reveal the freshest glow with physical exfoliants (grainy products) and chemical versions (with enzymes, too). Makeup goes on much more smoothly if you improve the texture of your skin.

2. Do not, under any circumstances, try a new product the week before your wedding.

Even with great products, there's always a chance of some crazy allergic reaction, so you don't want to use untested products.

3. Use facial products on your back, neck, and hands, too.

Everyone will be looking at your hands and many wedding dresses are backless; run that product down your body so your skin looks good everywhere.

(for hydration and collagen plumping) feels lovely and makes skin positively cherubic. “The DermalQuench is the perfect caper to a bridal regimen, and is also a big Emmy secret,” Somerville confides. Just as the clinic prepares clients for weddings, they also ready celebrities for red carpets. Myriad post-Emmy Awards references to Julia Louis Dreyfus's fabulous skin are a living testament to Somerville's results-oriented treatment regimens.

PUTTING YOUR BEST FACE FORWARD

A few wisdom-revealing wrinkles and even dull skin are generally unwelcome, but blemishes are another level of unacceptability on D-day. Somerville approaches acne-prone skin strategically and without mercy. Her confidence in treating the problem is comforting if you've ever experienced regular breakouts. “If you have acne and you live in L.A., you must come here,” Somerville asserts. “But if you go anywhere else, make sure it's a med-spa with an acne-specific facial, and never let them

complexion rebirth Clinic manager Susan Beal's favorite product, ExfoliKate, goes extra deep to remove dead cells for smoother, glowing skin.





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BRIDAL BEAUTY

massage your face because that stimulates glands to produce more oil.”

Somerville suggests that acne-prone patients come at least three months in advance for deep-cleansing facials with extractions and intermittent healing, plus preventative Dermalucent red and blue lights to fight bacteria on a subdermal level, so the Skin Health Experts can get acne into remission weeks before the wedding.

Even for basically normal combination skin, four to six weeks in advance is the shortest time frame recommended with treatments such as I.P.L. (phototherapy that literally sucks out sun spots), Laser Vascular (broken capillaries vanish instantly), half-face Laser Genesis (lights to control breakout of free radicals and stimulate collagen), Muscle Lift & Restoration (for optimum facial definition), and even more simple services like DermalQuench. Mother/daughter bridal preparation is relatively common, and these duos are urged to join Somerville's Skin Gym six months in advance for regular facials; in addition, they'll ultimately receive 20 percent off additional treatments like lasers once each woman's specific maintenance regimen begins.

After application of Somerville's NovaLash eyelash extensions (the only pharmaceutical-grade lash extensions available, so they're the safest, they are impeccably custom-fitted for natural shape and come in different colors), Somerville suggests keeping makeup clean and definitely trying out styles before committing to one for the big day. "You want to look fresh!" she says.

DO YOUR PART

Still, truly great skin starts at home, according to clinic manager and true believer Susan Beal. Somerville's targeted kits can be a good place to start: The Glow Kit is designed for normal skin; The Anti-Aging Kit is for, well, anti-aging; and The 911 Kit is aimed at acne.

"If you can buy only one Kate Somerville product and your skin can handle it, grab Ex-foliKate immediately," Beal says. "It's amazing at creating cellular turnover, and if you rub it on your hands, back, and shoulders, and then apply Katie's Goat Milk Body Lotion after the shower, your skin will feel amazing!" Beal also recommends Somerville's vitamin packs. "Anyone who wants great skin needs to take a look internally," she advises. ☑

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THE EBELL OF LOS ANGELES

743 SOUTH LUCERNE BOULEVARD
LOS ANGELES CALIFORNIA 90005

323-931-1277

inquiry@ebella.com
www.ebella.com



Michael Norwood

