

elegance

the privilege of age

dealing with the baby boom generation

by **Victoria** Rayner

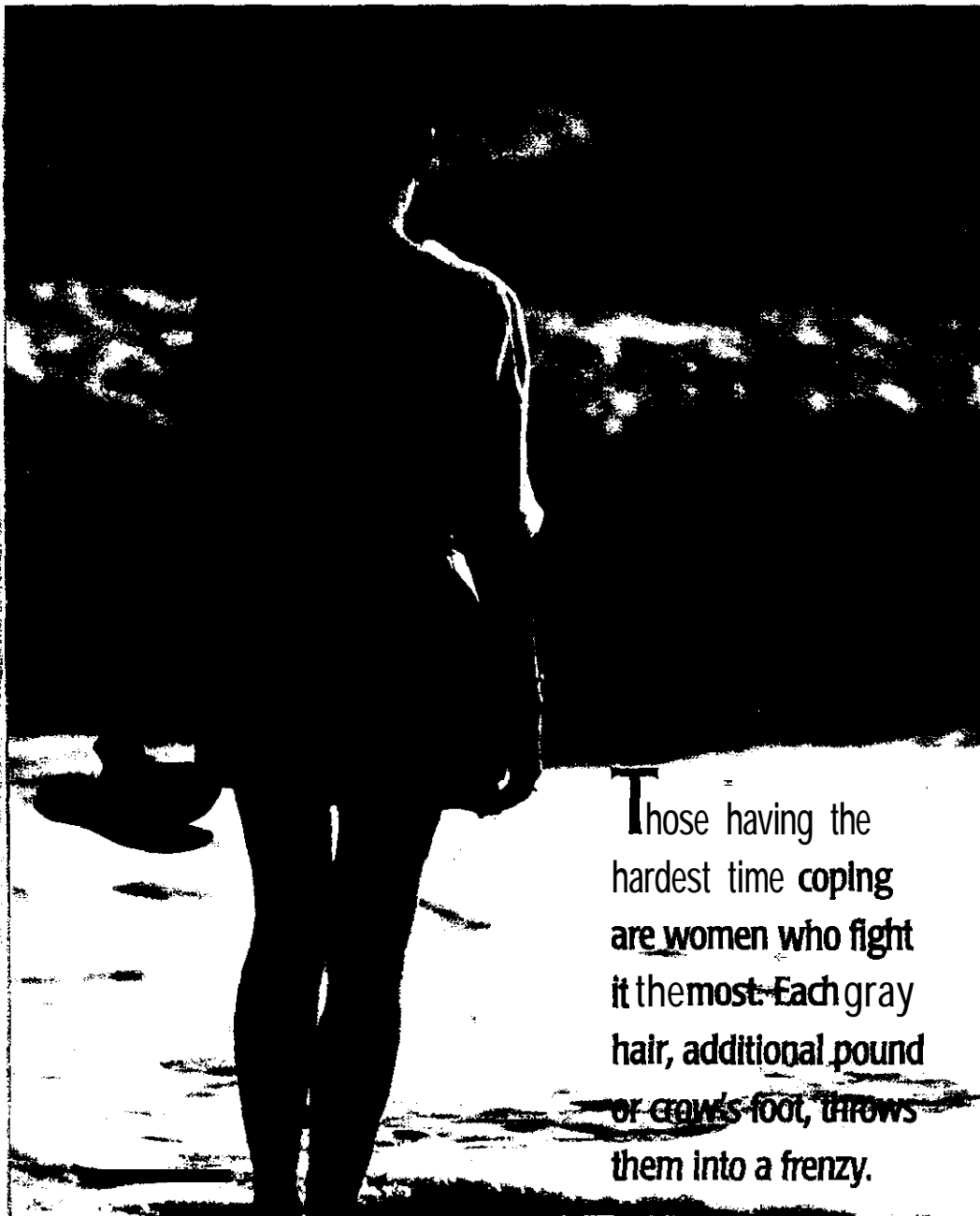
Have you ever fantasized about restructuring your practice and starting over? Most of us have daydreamed of dropping our penny-pinching clients and replacing them with those who appreciate what we have to offer and will pay handsomely for our services.

The essentials of marketing tell us if we **want** to be successful, we must choose a market and cater to it. You may be surprised that although the largest segment of the female population is currently made up of baby boomers (women between the ages of 32 to **50**), very few **estheticians** capitalize on this lucrative segment of the market.

After a woman passes her thirties, her life's demands begin to change. Priorities shift, children go away to school, responsibilities decrease, and instead of needing to cut back, this potential client **has** more time and money to spend on caring for herself.

Last year, Americans purchased over 2 billion dollars of cosmetic products just to ward off aging. As far back as 1991, the Shiseido Corporation saw this trend, recognized the enormous business **opportunity**, and invested over \$29 million in **an** institute for Advanced Skin Research in Tokyo, with the announced **goal** of developing the first anti-aging drug for the skin **within** seven years.

This article's goal is to provide the **esthetician** with a new and powerful way of understanding and marketing to the baby boom generation. **This will** prove useful in helping you, as a **skin** care practitioner, decide what goods and services to offer to meet the demands of the 40.5 million babies born between 1946 and 1964.



Those having the hardest time coping are women who fight it the most. Each gray hair, additional pound or crow's foot, throws them into a frenzy.

Rewards of catering to baby boomers

Although **our** population continues to grow, it is experiencing a major shift, because the average age of the population is rising. The reason for the rise is the post-war baby boom, which spanned about 18 years and crested from 1947 to 1957, producing about one fifth of our present population.

By **virtue** of their numbers, this dynamic group had and continues to have the greatest **influence** on politics, economics, music, fashion, social values, and just about everything else. As the majority of the population ages, there's a greater demand for medical advances that help people live longer, and for products and treatments that minimize the effects of aging.

A decade ago, an esthetician would have defined the typical skin care client as an acne sufferer. However, today she is identified as a mature female who is more concerned about looking younger than on controlling an outbreak of blemishes.

How can we help?

Most of the distress baby boomers experience over aging comes from living in a youth-oriented culture. The passage of time not only changes us, but it changes the way those around us relate to us.

The social stigma associated with aging **will** wane only when we **as** a

society alter our outlook and become less threatened by the idea of getting older. Successful aging requires **both** an internal and external **effort**, a strategy **that** involves a new way of thinking and seeing ourselves as we grow older.

This is when the services of beauty professionals can be the most beneficial. We can help women who are concerned about aging and **terrified** of the "change of life" understand the underlying causes of menopausal symptoms.

Breaking the age barrier

Aging is one of the most profound transitions human beings undergo. It is **only** natural for a **woman** approaching middle age to experience uneasiness about getting older. Those having the hardest time coping are women who fight it the most. Each gray **hair**, additional pound or crow's foot, throws them into a **frenzy**.

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One of the quickest ways that a woman can **odd years to** her appearance is by trying to look younger by force. By denying the **natural** aging process, or constantly trying to pass as younger, women **unnecessarily** torment **themselves**. **Although** there is nothing wrong with looking younger than one's **years**, it is **e&me** and **irrational to constantly** focus on it to the degree that it becomes an obsession.

De-mystifying menopause

It is truly remarkable just how many women in this country are brainwashed into thinking that every wrinkle is a catastrophe. Menopause **can** be a mature woman's worst enemy, unless of course, she has access to the special skills of a skin care specialist trained in **pre-** and post-menopausal skin care. The **discouraging** truth of the matter is that there are not many **estheticians** familiar with common esthetic problems women experience in their middle years.

The biggest challenge facing female baby **boomers** approaching menopause is ignorance. Up to 25 years ago, scientific information about what took place in women's bodies when their ovaries stopped producing hormones was pretty much limited to the scientific community. Today, extensive research has been done on the short and long-term effects of these chemical changes. Wise **estheticians will** educate themselves on the subject of menopause-what it is, when it will **occur**, and its symptoms.

Menopause does not happen **all** at once. There is a time period, often years before and years after, when the gradual decrease of female **hormones** can truly play havoc with a woman's skin. The endocrine glands control many of the body's functions through chemical substances called hormones. The **five** hormones most associated with the skin are: **androgens**, estrogens, thyroid hormones (**T4** and **T3**), steroids and insulin.

Unbalanced levels of any of these hormones can result in problems with skin, hair and nails. The most prevalent **pre-** and post-menopausal skin changes **are epidermal** moisture loss, premature wrinkling, **dyspigmentation**, increased skin sensitivity and redness from flushing.

Skin saving discoveries

Estheticians know that skin, more than any other part of the body, reveals a person's age. As **our** clients get older, collagen **and elastin** fibers begin to collapse and breakdown, making it difficult for skin to remain resilient and hold moisture on its **surface**. Other factors such as emotional upheaval, overindulgence, exposure to harsh weather, pollution, and sun damage reduce skin's lifetime and accelerate the natural aging process.

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Thanks to **dermatologic** research, a vast array of new skin-saving discoveries such as liposomes [delivery systems which carry moisturizing ingredients **into** the skin), **nayads™** (substances that stimulate skin cells and puts elasticity into collagen), **antioxidants** (vitamins C and E that repair damaged skin), retinoids (that thin the epidermis and stimulate collagen formation in the dermis), and alpha **hydroxy** acids (**exfoliant** agents that improve the appearance of the skin) are currently available. These solutions are specifically formulated to protect skin **and** delay **the** signs of aging. Because of the years of scientific development, it is easier than ever to be more effectual in helping clients delay the **outward** manifestations of aging.

Age management

Proper skin therapy is essential to the preservation of the baby **boomer's** complexion. A range of practical treatments can be specifically devised to **rehydrate** and **hyper-nourish** the skin, minimize **trans-epidermal** water loss and create a smooth feel to the skin. Tight, chapped flaky skin can be conditioned and comforted with any number of professional hydration treatments such as: **paraffin**, collagen fibers masks, or trace minerals found

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in seaweed. Seaweed is a natural **humectant** and acts as a skin **moisture-attracting** magnet.

Aromatherapy combined with pressure point massage has been used in ameliorating menopausal skin conditions. When essential oils are applied to the skin, clients have reported a lessening of the appearance of fine-line wrinkling, and the general consensus is that skin texture at least appears softer and more refined.

Mood-changing fragrances

A decrease in the production of estrogen commonly associated with menopause has a definite physiological affect on the **brain**. It can cause depression, **anxiety**, irritability, forgetfulness, crying spells, and lethargy. Over the past few years, scientists have begun to discover that fragrance is a potent force. Of all of the senses, smell has the biggest impact on the limbic system, the emotional center of the brain. Some members of **the** medical community including Dr. Alan Hirsch, the Director of the Smell and Taste Treatment Research Foundation in Chicago, say the fastest way to induce change in mood behavior is **with** smell, and have used **aromatherapy** to improve mood. The treatment of mental or physical **difficulties** with aromatic substances is via inhalation or direct absorption **through** pressure-point massage.

Therapeutic massage

For those aging baby **boomers** whose complexion has become dull and lifeless, therapeutic facial massage is more than just a relaxing and calming **experience**, it is a necessity to stimulate circulation and restore uneven color tone. Rhythmic manipulations, when employed with moist heat for at least five **minutes** stimulate the blood, bringing it to the skin's **surface** to produce a healthier looking complexion.

Diet and vitamin supplements

A slower metabolism makes it harder for middle-aged women to reduce their weight. Crash dieting, starvation, and diet pills destroy the appearance of healthy skin. For the baby boomer interested in the long-term maintenance of their complexion, the esthetician **can make** simple dietary recommendations. Dietary guidelines such as drinking more water (up to eight **8oz** glasses per day), modifying the diet with fresh foods, increasing natural protein intake, reducing animal protein, eliminating sugar and limiting fats can do wonders. More severe **modifications** in a client's eating habits **will** require a referral to a qualified professional.

Some clients may be candidates for **vitamin** supplements: heavy drinkers, smokers, clients who feast regularly on processed foods, those who are on hormone **replacement** therapy, and those who don't eat **well-bal-**

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anced meals may opt for a **multi-vitamin**. If we suspect that one of our clients has a vitamin deficiency we **can** recommend that she seek the services of a licensed **dietician** or physician.

Unwanted hair

As the years go by, superfluous hair on the face can become a real problem. Hormonal changes can cause hair to grow or become more coarse on the upper lip or on the **chin** areas. Moles may also appear, sometimes covered **with** hair. A thorough physical checkup is **indicated** in all cases. Excessive hair growth may be an indication of endocrine deficiencies and clients should be referred to an endocrinologist (a medical specialist who deals with hormone disorders). Unwanted hair can be

Taking into account that the largest client population is going through mid-life, it's just good business sense for us to learn what shades are particularly unflattering to **gray** hair, and spend time evaluating what materials are unkind to an aging complexion.

removed with a depilatory wax if it is mild, but for hairs that are more difficult to destroy, the safest method is electrolysis. The client whose skin has unsightly moles or any skin abnormality that shows signs of rapid growth must be referred to a dermatologist for **immediate** medical evaluation.

Remedies for skin discoloration

Cosmetically, there **are** a wide variety of preparations available for concealing skin discoloration and **evening-out** skin tone. An application of a custom-blended foundation or **any** one of a number of cover creams can camouflage dilated surface veins and **pigmentary** problems that stem from hormonal causes, overexposure to the sun, or external applications of chemicals or cosmetics. You as an **esthetician** should look into non-prescription solutions such as glycolic acids or bleaching agents, for fading hyperpigmented areas. Remember to exercise caution **and** consult with a physician if any doubts arise as to how to best deal with these problems.

Cosmetic surgery

If you plan on working with baby **boomers**, one question frequently asked is "Can you *recommend a good* **plastic** surgeon?" Take the utmost care to find not one but three of the most reputable surgeons within your area. It has always been my experience that the

best recommendations come from the patients of **surgeons**; however, you may choose to contact the American Board of Plastic Surgery or your family doctor for a recommendation. When you have the names of several, find out all you can about them. Take your time in choosing **which** ones you will work with. You can call or write your state medical society to obtain more information regarding their background.

It is definitely worth a visit to the doctors' offices to see some examples of their work. Many of these doctors have nurses on their staff on whom they have performed various surgical procedures and who will not hesitate to show you the corrections that have been performed. Be sure to go over in **detail** with the doctor the different surgical procedures they offer. You should take as long as you feel is necessary to satisfy all of your concerns. A good plastic surgeon will advise your client as to whether or not they are a good candidate for cosmetic surgery and if so, what kind of results they can reasonably expect. One last word of caution—sending your clients to a surgeon is a very serious matter **and** there can be all kinds of legal ramifications connected with your decision should anything go wrong, so beware.

Mid-life: The age of elegance

As beauty professionals, we **are** in the perfect position to help our mature clients **redefine** the idea of age **with** appearance counseling. We **can** help them view the aging process as a positive challenge by pointing out the potential rewards, of which there **are many**.

There is an old French saying, "Elegance is the privilege of age." With the transition of years, women gain not just **wrinkles**, but experience, wisdom, and insight. The mature woman acquires sophistication, empowerment, and autonomy, and her roles proliferate. She soon learns that there is more to beauty than just the physical manifestations of youth.

Appearance counseling recommendations

A grandmother disguised as **Cindy** Crawford looks no more ridiculous than an adolescent masquerading in an outfit suitable for a professional woman of forty. The most elegant of women are those who through the years, have carefully discovered **their** own personal style, know **exactly what** looks well on them and stick to it.

There are, of course, some women who are the **first** to admit their outdated look needs revising. Such a client may turn to her esthetician for feedback and professional guidance. The most successful **estheticians** listen to their clients concerns and then focus on ways to meet their needs.

Taking into account that the largest client population **continues**



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is going through mid-life, and has vowed to grow old **with** stylish vengeance, it's just good business sense for us to learn what shades are particularly unflattering to gray hair, and spend time evaluating what materials are unkind to **an** aging complexion. A simple idea, **yes**, but also a real smart business move, one that could **earn** you a reputation for **legendary** service. The esthetician who finds out what hair and clothing styles most flatter her mature clients is **sure** to outdistance her **com-**petition and **ensure** a loyal following for years.

If we investigate the baby **boomer** market, we can clearly see a multitude of potential **opportunities** and plan effective strategies. In today's competitive business environment, **cre-**ative strategic planning is essential for financial growth and professional survival.

After reading this article, you should have some idea of common problems baby **boomers** are facing as they approach menopause, and what we as estheticians **can** do to help them. If you understand their special needs and help teach women in the prime of their lives the "**art**" of agelessness, you **will** derive a great deal of personal satisfaction, not to mention a higher income.

For more information, on **pre-** and **post-**menopausal skin care, Les Nouvelles **Esthe-**tiques readers may send a self-addressed envelope to the Center for Appearance and Esteem 251 Post Street, San Francisco 94108. ■



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teaching **hospitals**. She is the owner of the Advanced Skin Care **Training** Center which provides advanced esthetic training programs for estheticians and nurses who wish to work in a medical setting. Ms. Rayner has devoted the past four years to writing the **first** textbook on clinical cosmetology, **entitled** Clinical Cosmetology A Medical Approach to Esthetic Procedures, **published** by Milady Publishing House, 3 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, New York, (800) 347-7747.